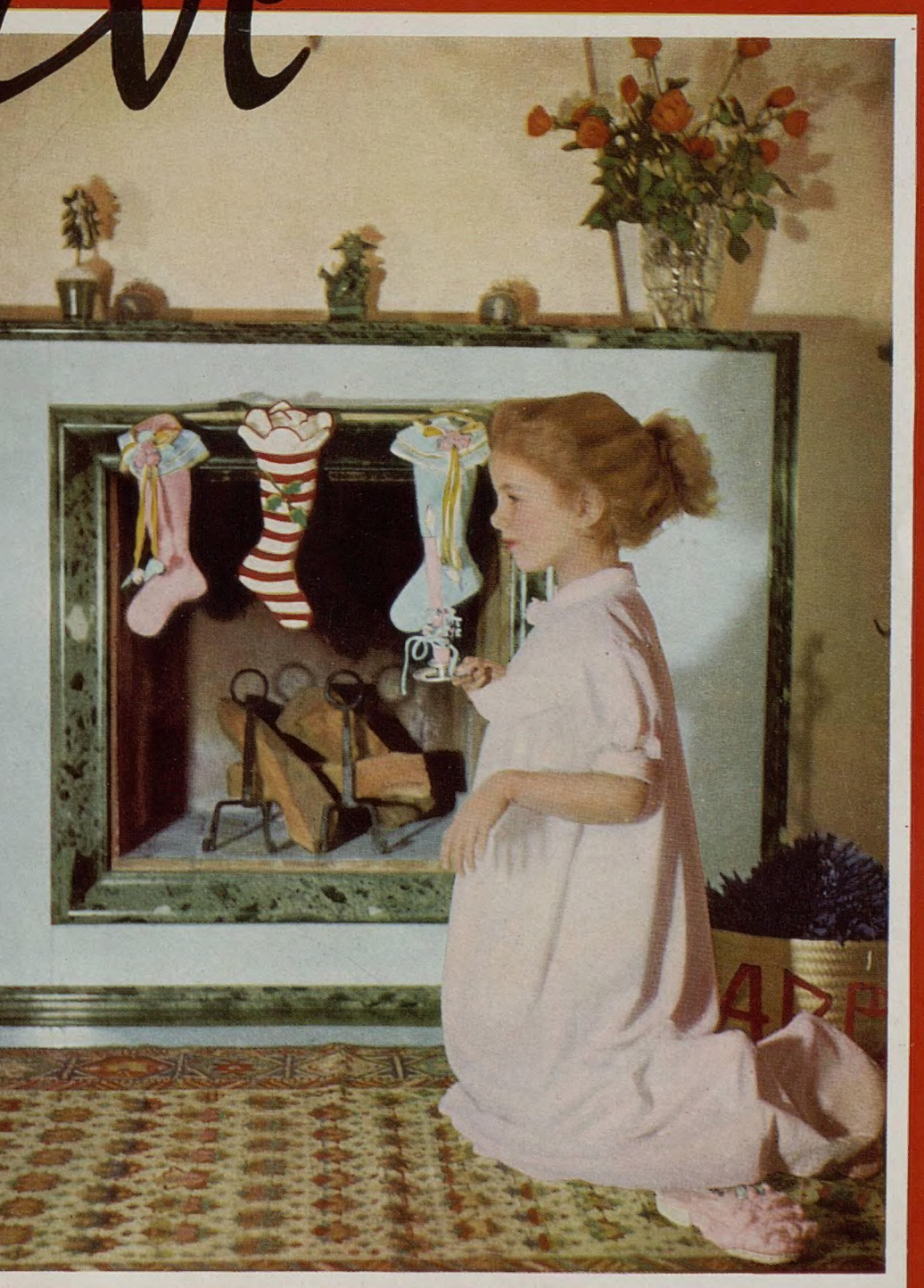
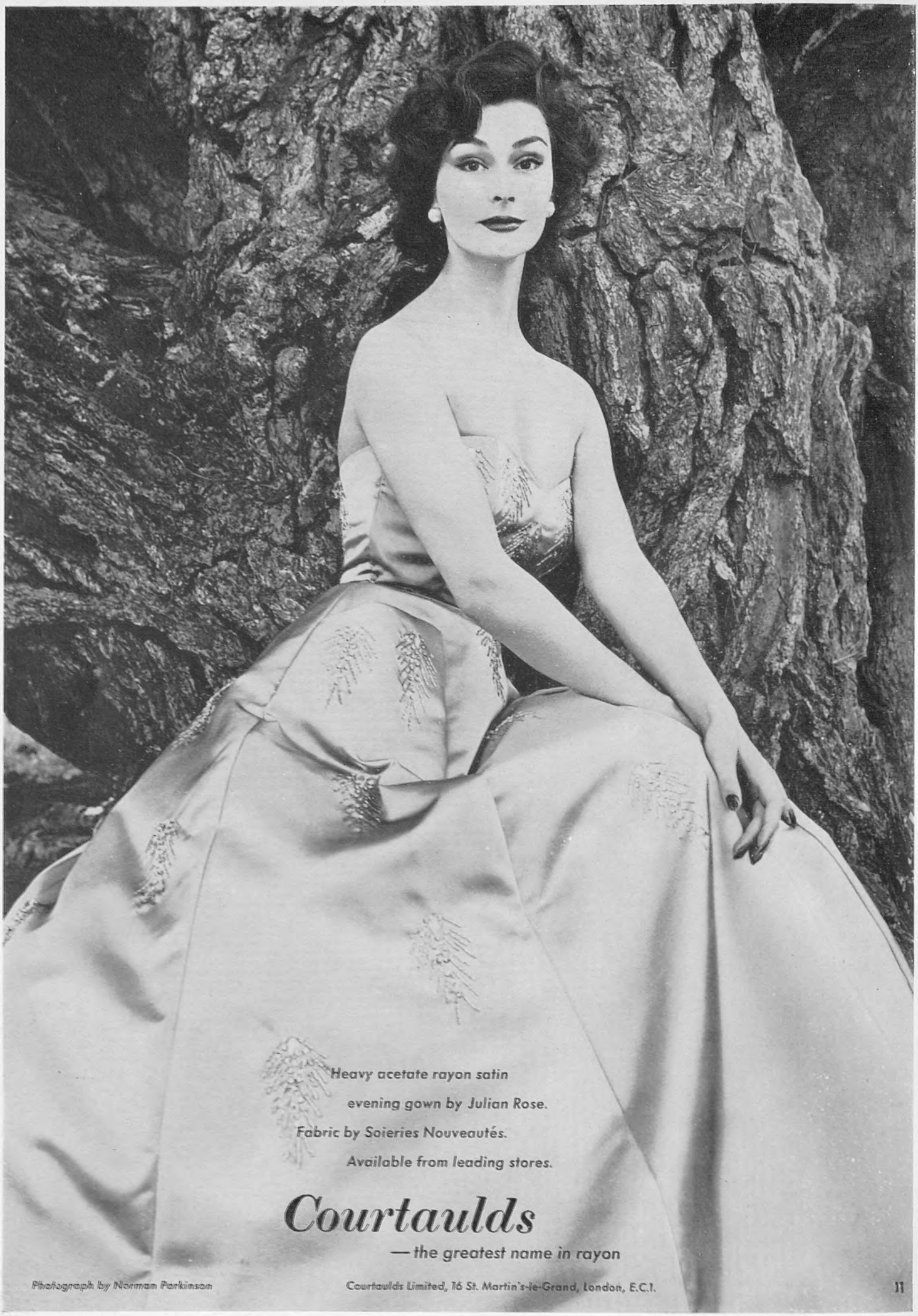
# BRITANNIA and Eve



## Christmas Number

DECEMBER, 1954

TWO SHILLINGS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# BRITANNIA and Eve

VOL. 49 NO. 6

DECEMBER 1954


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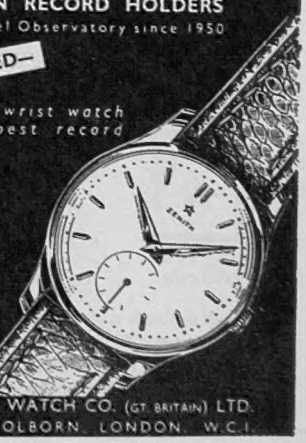
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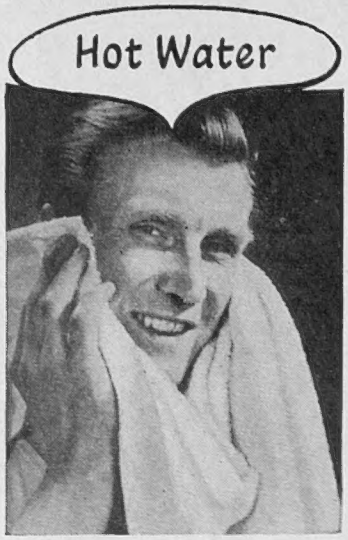

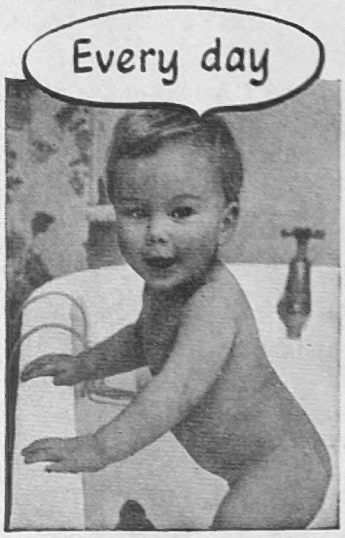


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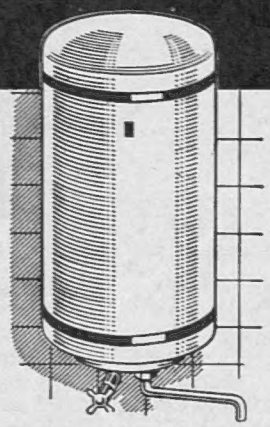

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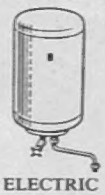
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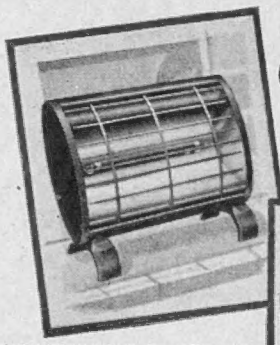

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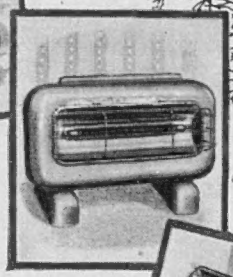

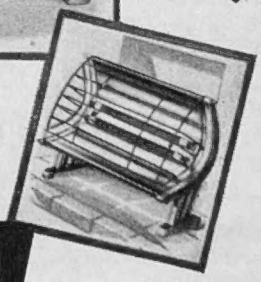

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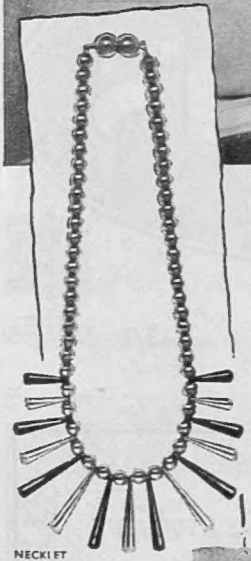

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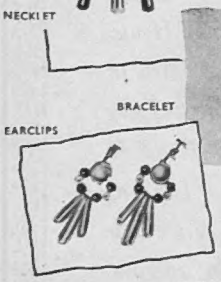

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Wear your heart on your sleeve this Christmas, tell the man in your life how you feel about him by giving Mellowed Leather eau-de-cologne, it's so refreshing it whisks away fatigue, makes him feel like Beau Brummell! 12/9.

Here's just the thing for one woman to give another, Steiner's rich, creamy Handmilk that will enable her to keep her new year resolution—to have lovelier hands this year. In the squeez-e-plastic container, 6/9.

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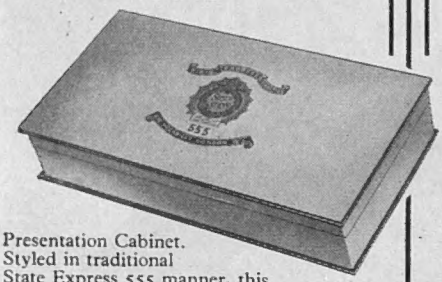

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# The little weakness of Madame Thibaud

by
MARGUERITE STEEN

*Illustrations by WETHERBEE*

*She had all the virtues—a perfection that might have been inhuman but for one tiny flaw*

THE heat simmered on the uneven whiteness of the empty street and the dust-powdered limes that formed a thin avenue up to the church at the end. Across the oyster-coloured roofs appeared the trees of the forest that afflicted the inhabitants of Artémise-les-Bois with their plague of immense bluebottle flies, which bit like tigers and clung like leeches to their prey.

Outside the Thibaud establishment ("Vins, Liqueurs, Consommations, Charbon"), a narrow strip of shade accommodated two iron tables, whose red-hot outer extremities were avoided by Monsieur Thibaud's customers—slightly stupefied by a combination of the heat and their host's rhetoric.

"What is a woman without a weakness? She is a monster, a horror, an enormity, to be avoided by every person in his senses! Monsieur le Baron will bear me out." Appealed to in this direct fashion, Monsieur le Baron gave a grudging nod.

"My wife, messieurs, had all the virtues: beauty, intelligence, common sense. As housekeeper—a genius. As cook—ah!" Monsieur Thibaud bunched the fat fingers of both hands together and pulled a kiss from his pursed lips; tears were rolling down his big, meridional face. "If you had tasted her cheese; it was the little Jesus in velvet trousers. And in the garden it was the same: she had but to look at a cabbage and it was glorified, the pods swelled if she went near a row of peas.

"And all that—all that, messieurs"—he dropped his hands on the table and looked earnestly from face to face—"was for me. From the day we were married, she dedicated herself to me, as her patron saint. Every breath she drew was for me. There are things one knows without telling; one feels them

here "—Monsieur Thibaud smote the mat of grizzled hair that showed through the gap in his vest. " Even in church, it was *me* she said her prayers to ! Le bon Dieu put up with it for a time, but in the end He became annoyed."

He pushed himself back from the table and glared at them for a moment through his tears. Then a smile broke slowly.

" But she had a little weakness. *Une pe-ti-te faiblesse.*" He lingered on the syllables with tender satisfaction. " It is the little flaws, no, that endear a person ?—the tooth that is not quite straight, the faint cast in an eye ?—If it had not been for the little weakness, such perfection would have been inhuman. With your permission, messieurs "—the smile broadened and grew shy as he begged their indulgence—" I will reveal to you the little weakness of Madame Thibaud."

The two gentlemen made polite gestures of assent, and Thibaud rolled indoors.

MONSIEUR LE BARON DE BELLEFEUILLES was lord of the manor of Artémise ; ground down by half-a-dozen centuries of inbreeding, aided by dissipation, he had come to look very much like the people who worked on his estate, short, bent, bow-legged and sly-eyed. He wore a tweed coat, riding breeches ending in a pair of rubbed leggings that had not known wax or bone for years, and a week's growth of beard.

One of the wealthiest landowners in the province (foreseeing, in 1937, the depreciation of the franc, he had cunningly converted cash into kind), he was proverbial for his meanness, and, in his younger days, for his maintenance of the *droit de seigneur*, which—in theory, at least—put at his disposal every village girl as she ripened, on pain of serious inconvenience to her family. Of latter years the right had fallen into desuetude, partly owing to the growing independence, backed by local magistrates, of the tenantry, partly to circumstances over which Monsieur de Bellefeuilles had ceased to have control.

His companion at the table was a short, stout man in the later forties, pale-faced, heavily moustached and, by his costume, a dweller in towns. He might be a traveller in wines or silks. Artémise produced its own wine and its housewives bought the materials for their dresses from the stalls of the nearest market town. After twisting his neck and screwing his eyes in vain for sample cases in the dusty Citroën which the stranger had parked in front of the establishment Thibaud, the Baron observed,

" You are passing through on business ? "

The stranger nodded, his thoughts evidently elsewhere.

" To Aix ? " persisted the Baron.

She thanked him as though he had given her the Kohinoor

"Farther." He did not seem disposed to give himself away.

"Ah, bon, bon." The Baron glared at a person who did not appear to understand his duty to a place where the advent of a stranger is news, something to be carried back to the château and chewed over with the pork. If all else failed, Monsieur de Bellefeuilles would be put to the painful necessity of buying him a drink. "You won't find many buyers here," said the Baron, with vicious satisfaction. The stranger started.

"Excuse me?"—A row of very white though possibly unauthentic teeth flashed under the dark moustache. "I see; it is a misunderstanding. Permit me to present myself. My name is Voussard. I represent the firm of Chambon, dealers in antique furniture, jewellery, objets d'art, and to some smaller degree, in pictures."

The grimace which, in the Baron's case, passed for a smile, wrinkled the six-days' beard without enhancing its owner's appearance. The prospect of adding to his economies was enough, at any time, to make him agreeable.

"As a connoisseur, monsieur, you would no doubt be interested to visit the château. Our friend Thibaud neglected to introduce us. I am the Baron de Bellefeuilles. I shall have pleasure in showing you the collection made by my grandfather, a great amateur of the Italian school——"

"Paintings?" said Voussard quickly. "Those, I regret, are not in my line. But I can give you the name of a colleague, who would undoubtedly be gratified——"

"My invitation," said the Baron stiffly, "was intended personally, not professionally. I have paid you a compliment, monsieur, which you do not appear to appreciate!"

Voussard, who had heard that one before, apologised and changed the subject.

"Our friend"—he tilted his head towards the door through which Thibaud had vanished—"is recently a widower?"

"Some years.—You will join me in a glass of wine?" said the Baron desperately. He had remembered a Second Empire console in one of the attics, and some odds and ends of bric-à-brac.

"A touching devotion. I should like to have met the lady who inspired it," said Voussard, accepting with a nod.

"You are interested, perhaps, in buhl?" interposed the Baron, as he reluctantly replenished his companion's glass.

" You would hardly believe, would you, that that was false ? " he said

"SHE was beautiful," went on Voussard dreamily, " and younger, I imagine, than her husband ? It is curious, but I have a picture in my mind : tall, elegant—not in the mondaine sense, but in poise, in movement——"

" This is not your first visit to Artémise ? " interrupted the Baron suspiciously.

" Most certainly it is ! " laughed Voussard. " I am merely drawing on my imagination. So far as my knowledge goes, monsieur, the late Madame Thibaud had a boil on her nose, a moustache to rival my own and sufficient adipose to match our host's ! But romanticism is infectious, and I must confess to being moved by such enthusiasm. I hope you will spare my illusions ! "

" There 's nothing wrong with the illusions," sulked the Baron.

"Ah ! She *was* beautiful ! " cried Voussard triumphantly.

" So they say."

" But your own opinion, Monsieur le Baron ?—You must have known her, at least by sight. As a man of experience," flattered Voussard, " you consider her husband's admiration was justified ? "

Monsieur de Bellefeuilles admitted it grudgingly.

" Blonde ? "

" Dark."

" Tiens, you surprise me. I had a vision of Ceres, rising from the cabbages. . . . , Continue ; her eyes—— ? "

They were more or less grey, thought the Baron.

" Dark-haired, grey-eyed : a seductive combination. And the figure ?—Pardon my insistence, but I am anxious to complete the picture. Fausse maigre ?—ah, the ideal ! " The glimpses he had had of the feminine population of Artémise prompted a further inquiry. " Perhaps the lady was not born in these parts ? "

" Toulon—according to Thibaud." By now the Baron was furious. This fool was drinking his wine and what was he getting for it ? He grabbed the bottle as Voussard's hand went absently out to it.

"A thousand pardons, my thoughts were elsewhere. You will join me in a bottle when our friend returns ?—How fortunate you are "—again he was off at a tangent—" to live so far from the beaten track ! The forest, the vineyards—it reminds one of nineteenth-century romances ; the women should trail their skirts and carry parasols. No doubt your peasants are quite unspoiled ? There is surely nothing to do in a place like this, with no cinema, no dance hall, but make love ? "

The Baron ground his few remaining teeth. How was this fool to be brought back to business ?—There was a marble bust, by Champeil, of the late Baron, which he had wanted for years to get rid of . . .

"A little tranquil," continued Voussard, " for a beautiful young woman from Toulon, with no family to look after. However, virtue is said to be its own reward. That, and Monsieur Thibaud, would no doubt compensate for the gaieties of Toulon ! "

" Pouah ! " said Monsieur Thibaud, appearing suddenly, with sweat running down his brow and his hands full of small cardboard boxes. " It is hot, even for Artémise ! Allow me, messieurs, to invite you indoors, where there is also "—he dropped an eyelid and indicated with a nod a solitary Artémisien, ploughing his ancient way through the dust up the middle of the street—" a little privacy." (*Contd. on p.* 62)

# The Night the Animals Hear

by R. H. FERRY

*A time when fantasy meets reality and holly whispers of prophetic dreams*

NEVER speak disparagingly of animals on Christmas Eve—the lowly ox and ass of the fields, present in the stable where Christ was born, or our pets warming by the Yule log fire, for the prettiest of legends says that animals can understand human voices till midnight when the Christmas bells ring out.

Another, equally endearing, tells about the Robin—the Bird of God and "bearer of good tidings." The little redbreast, in fact, is more coloured by legend than any other bird hopping on our window-sills.

The story goes that the robin plucked a thorn in pity from Christ's crown, and, in doing so, wounded its own breast. Our Lord blessed the bird and endowed it with perpetual life.

Another version tells that a tiny bird of dusky hue timidly approached the cross and with its wings wiped away the tears that flowed from the Saviour's eyes, while with its beak it plucked out the thorns from His brow. A drop of blood fell on to the robin and tinged with scarlet its dull brown feathers. These are legends, yet it is a fact that a little of the scarlet pigment on the robin's breast will come off if wiped gently with a soft white cloth.

Friendly little Robin! Even the Greeks had a legend for it. It was that Our Lord as a (*Continued on page* 65)

# CHRISTMAS in ROMAN

**By ALAN IVIMEY**

*Illustration by PAULINE BAYNES*

LET us suppose that we are standing on the deck of a big, bluff-bowed, three-masted sailing-ship and getting our first view of Londinium.

The vessel is slowly moving up-stream with the last of the flood and the corner bastion of the great brown-grey stone wall of the city creeps past the stowed spar on which you are leaning to watch the panorama of a strange town glide closer to your view. Right ahead the long timber bridge spans the Thames and downstream from it, alongside the high town walls, runs a wide wooden wharf.

The red roofs of buildings rising steeply in tiers are all we can see over the top of the ramparts, but the great red-brick Basilica—town hall, law courts and market—stands high above the rest.

As we step ashore the hatches are already off the holds and we can see the rows of huge earthenware jars we loaded in Gaul with the good wine and oil of the warm south. Shivering we wrap our cloaks about us and step ashore to where our friends are waving and follow them through an arched postern in the wall.

The nearest buildings at the foot of the hill stand well back from the battlements, in case of attack, and we turn leftward along a cobbled path to join the main road up from the towered end of the bridge. At the top of the hill we can see the great Basilica again through the press of two- and four-wheeled carts and waggons and cloaked horsemen, and people pushing in and out of brick-fronted shops with candles and lamps a-flicker behind their clear glass windows.

The streets are straight and laid out like a gridiron, and away from the main thoroughfares, houses stand in their own gardens. We are walking west now, downhill towards a bridge over a stream, and our friend points out a little temple to Mithras down there by the water. He adds that this western slope is a little less cold than most places in town and that we had better exchange our bare-kneed southern style of dressing for the thick woollen socks they wear here and a longer cloak.

Soon we reach his house, single storeyed and built round a small courtyard. Its walls are plastered in an ochre tint.

HE takes out a little key and as soon as the door is unlocked a beautiful warmth greets us. Under the floors and in hollows in the walls are heating flues from an underground furnace. And these walls are gay with flower and leaf designs in red, brown, green and yellow plaster, while the floor has a mosaic of Hercules with his club.

In each window round the courtyard is a little pine or fir tree, arranged so that candles shine upon it, and hung all over with glass beads and toys. For to-morrow is the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month (the old tenth month before they pushed July and August into the summer) and this has always been the feast of the Unconquered Sun.

# LONDON

This is a feast of Mithras, the ever beautiful one who is god of light and lord of the struggle against darkness.

In the household we are visiting, the elder son is a young legionary officer on leave from his station in Germany. Like most of his fellow soldiers he is a keen follower of the cult. It has the sort of trappings a young man likes—secret meetings in underground chambers and caves, hooded and masked figures, various degrees such as Ravens, Hidden Ones, Lions, and the rest. It is only after attaining the rank of Lion that you are considered fully fledged, and the young man is hoping to be raised to it soon.

But his parents have turned to Christianity amid the hundreds of incense-smoking altars, to gods old and new, in this city. And their bishop has told them that the founder of their faith is often referred to in Rome as The True Sun and Our New Sun.

So there seems no harm in this old Sun festival however the faithful Christians frown on Mithras and all his works. In any case, the old custom of the tree, green in winter, is a dear one and loved by the children. So presently, after a steam bath and a dinner of sturgeon, goose and beef served ready cut on coloured-glass plates and with suitable wines from glass goblets, the younger children are brought in to say good night. Also, we have brought gifts, from far away.

THERE are brooches cunningly enamelled for the daughters and for our hostess a little bronze chatelaine complete with eyebrow tweezers, nail cleaners and an ear-spoon. For our host a tiny palette of white marble, subtly grooved, for mixing his eye salves (he being thus afflicted), and for his son a handsome pair of red sandals with nailed soles. There is also a bronze rattle, like a little spade with rings through it, for one of the servant's babies.

Later, there calls upon us one of the officers of the town guard and, it being a mild, bright night, invites the visitors for a walk along the wall-top while he inspects his sentries.

So he takes us through quiet streets and first to the eastern gate and up to its top. And hence, he tells us, the road goes to those eastern parts where Saxon pirates come thrusting their dragon ships up our rivers to rob and rape and carry away what they can. Then we follow along the rampart to the north gate and see another ribbon of a stone causeway disappearing over heathy slopes. After many days' marches, it reaches Eboracum, where the main garrison stands to defend the province against the barbarians from beyond the Wall.

On the turrets, always ready, are the great catapults with their huge timbers, ready to mow down invaders who may come (and at any time now, they may come) within range beyond the gleaming water in the moat. And so to the eastern gate, where the road runs a few thousand paces and then splits; one way for Deva and the other for the blessed Waters of the Sun, to which our host is soon to take his family for a course of treatment.

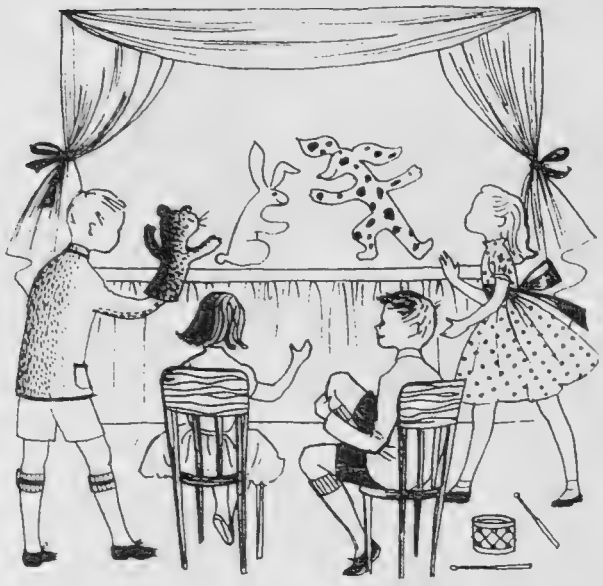
A little way to the south-east, on the top of the second of Londinium's twin hills, stands the stone church of the Christian bishop, to which the family will be going to-morrow with gifts.

The city looks solid and very safe under the moon, inside its great wall. For 300 years it has stood since Boudicca's terrible raid. Yet now this young officer of the town guard speaks of danger from the east and from the north. As though one could be certain of nothing. Yet, surely, it looks as if it would last for ever?

Far away, from out the dark forest northward, a wolf howls.

We say good night, leaving our young soldier to his duty, and go down the steps from the wall into the street, where now the moon gives us no light.

But eastward, a star shines for us.



A successful children's party balances the professional type of entertainment with boisterous sessions to work off high spirits

# Entertaining the Youngest Set

By MURIEL SEGAL

*Illustrations by KIRBY*

GIVING a children's party is no light undertaking. One realises that the children have been looking forward to this party for days and often they 've had to be very good under threat of " No party." " If you don't behave better you can't go to Richard's party on Friday." " All right, you see. If you play around after your bath in the cold you 'll get another cough and you won't be able to go to Richard's party ! " " Now you get into bed and stop larking around or you 'll be too tired to-morrow to go to Richard's party ! " And on the day itself : " Now mind, if you get that shirt dirty you 'll have to stay home. I 'm not going to iron another for Richard's party."

So after all this the party just *has* to be good. But, luckily, children have such a huge capacity for enjoyment, and it is very easy, really, to give them " the time of their lives."

Nevertheless, many parents are rather stunned at the thought of coping with a score of boys and girls of varying ages and of different types, the tough children with the " progressive " parents who are neighbours on the left, the shy little girl who lives opposite, and the two spoilt, wealthy children, and the orphan twins who are quite used to doing without toys, all mixed up together—for with children there is no possibility of sorting out your invitations as a competent hostess might do with adult guests. We don't say that Peter, aged six, will interest Andy ; or " I want the Smith twins to meet the Anderson girls," or " We can't mix the Brown boys and the Jones child." No, thank goodness, the youngsters don't know what it means to " not mix " ; they just naturally gravitate towards anything else around their own age. The mere fact of being three, or seven or nine years old is enough to have in common.

So here they are, the tomboys and the prim little girls in nylon smocks, shy, spoilt cry-babies and jolly little poppets, all expected to arrive at three-thirty on Friday for your annual Christmas party.

What to do with them ? Here is advice from the expert in making children laugh . . . and, after all, if a child laughs, he or she is having fun. And if everyone at the party has fun, then it 's surely a good party.

Annette Mills, of TV fame, tells us about the party she gave lately for her six-year-old grandson Richard, to which his small sister Susie, aged four, also invited friends. (*Continued on page* 65)

*Laughter means fun . . . fun means a good party . . . here is advice from a genius in child entertainment, Annette Mills*

"I am engaged to Jean-Louis," she said. "But know him—? Not so"

# Oh love thy Neighbour

By ANN ANDERSON

*Illustrations by NICOLAS*

A RAW December 23 at the airport, and Chris's mother had two damp handkerchiefs in her bag, one down her blouse, the fourth she now held screwed up in her hand and kept dabbing away at her eyes. "To think that you're going to leave us to spend Christmas with foreigners . . . !" she murmured again.

"Now, Mother. We've been over all that before. Stop sniffling darling."

With a brave Far-be-it-from-me-to-stand-in-the-way-of-my-daughter's-happiness smile, she pulled herself together with an enormous and dramatic effort and switched to practical things. "Well now, don't forget, my sweetie-heart—no sherry, no wine, no champagne—no alcoholic beverage of *any* kind. If people try to force it on you, just explain you've had yellow jaundice and tell them your liver's still a bit rocky. And not too much rich food." Mrs. Jennings took a deep breath and tried to look as if she didn't know she was saying the wrong thing, "And you go easy on that Frenchman, too——"

"Yes," Chris said, not listening, her eyes sparkling to rival the frost on the ground, her gaze way out over the airport, watching the great silver bird that was to carry her to Paris and to the slender Frenchman with the swooning eyes and the voice that made her come out in goose pimples all down her arms. The Frenchman whom she had to see again to find out if the letters she had been receiving from him ever since she left her job in Paris meant that he loved her. The Frenchman whose elegant sweetness had haunted her for four solid months.

"And you be careful with all that cosmopolitan crowd—if you run into any trouble at *all*, just you phone us and reverse the charges. And no talking to strange women," she lowered her voice. "Don't forget what I read in the paper about the White Slave Traffic——"

"THAT was five years ago, Mother," Chris sighed, trying not to sound impatient. "And what's more I don't suppose there'll be much in the way of kidnappers at this house party. Jean-Louis' parents are very civilized people you know——"

Jean-Louis came hurrying to hand her down from the table. "Oh, you done it!" he cried, his grammar going to pot

"They may be a marquis and a marquise and live in a château, but they're still foreigners, dear." Mrs. Jennings gave a dogged British sniff. "All those dreadful counts and things. Just make sure you don't speak to anyone from behind the Iron Curtain. There was that poor innocent girl whisked away over the border only the other day——"

"Passengers for Flight No. 144," a stern, authoritative voice broke over the microphone above them, and an officer in uniform stood ready at the door to escort them across the aerodrome.

"That plane's one of your safe ones I trust?" Mrs. Jennings whispered to the man, taking his uniformed sleeve in an urgent grip. "It has a spare engine hasn't it? Only I wouldn't let my daughter—"

"Mother darling, for Heaven's sake, goodbye darling, have a happy Christmas! Don't forget—your presents are all wrapped up in my wardrobe. I'll see you in a week——"

Chris looked back, laughing and shaking her head, waving to the little dumpy figure with a white blur at her feet which was one of the damp handkerchiefs . . . Of course I don't regret it, she assured a passenger in front of her, under her breath. After all, one Christmas in twenty-two, good heavens, she frowned belligerently at the passenger, what do you think I am? Aren't I old enough to stand on my own feet? Wasn't I working with the United Nations in Paris until four months ago? Don't I speak French?

Don't you think I can hold my own among a lot of foreigners? Nonsense. Of course I'm not going to be homesick on Christmas Day, what with Uncle Hector's same old jokes and everything! For Heaven's sake, she silently addressed the unsuspecting trilby hat of the man in the seat in front of her, stop all this sentimentality and grow up.

JUST to reassure herself she opened her bag and took out an elegant sheet of the gilt-edged de Rocheville stationery. The letter inviting her to the house-party was, of course, written by the Marquise, but Jean-Louis had written a little note on the back. "Please to come, *chérie*, you must. I have told everyones you will be the Life and Soul of the Party. And I so madly miss you."

("Would you care to order a drink?" An air hostess stood solicitously smiling. "No thank you," Chris said, and added under her breath, parrot-fashion, "I'm recovering from yellow jaundice contracted in Paris through the rich cooking. Don't you realize I can't drink anything but lemonade for months to come? Well then.")

Life and Soul of the Party . . . A wry smile wrinkled Chris's vivid blue eyes. Yes, she'd always been the Life and Soul of the Party, she'd inherited it from her Uncle

Hector so her mother maintained—Uncle Hec whose annual joke was "Who killed the Dead Sea?" Uncle Hec who stood on his head on the dining-room table on Christmas Day 1950, dressed up as the maid in 1951; and in 1952 there had been the fake walnuts and the rubber glasses which had had them all in fits; then it was the Christmas Day in 1953 that Mrs. Jennings had burst the blood vessel laughing at Uncle Hec's imitations of Mrs. Mop.

Chris had it in her, too. "Born comic" her mother told everyone, wiping her eyes on her skirt. "You should just have seen her walk away with the school concert when she was nine, imitating Scots and doing that Reel. Everybody *died* laughing!"

Well yes, but during her year in Paris Chris's repertoire had been somewhat different. After a little drink to start her off she could be counted on to give her impressions of any popular local personality and somehow, always to her secret surprise, her audience became rapidly convulsed. And after the third drink, there was the wicked jazzy Harlem dance from *Porgy And Bess*—shaking her skirt, kicking out her legs which no one ever questioned were her best feature, slinking against a pillar, eyes half-closed, singing "Ah loves you Porgy . . . " Oh yes, after a little encouragement, Chris Jennings was well away, Chris was always invited, Chris was the Life and Soul of the Party. . . .

Yes, but if I can't even have one champagne to help me along? What then? Will Jean-Louis be disappointed if I can't work up that *abandon* that makes me forget what an exhibition I'm making of myself and be entertaining? What if I disappoint him? I don't want to disappoint him. I want— Now, really! Chris pulled herself up. If I can't be amusing without getting squiffy, I'm not worth much anyway. And surely you don't think, she demanded of herself, that he's inviting you for the sole purpose of being socially amusing? Surely there's another reason . . . ?

"Fasten your belts, please!"

ALREADY . . . ! Chris jerked out of her reverie and sat up. Yes, they were circling over Paris. A shiver of nervous excitement swept through her. Thinking ahead to the Château de Verlan she saw the chandeliers and the silver, the great Venetian mirrors and the tapestries, the boars' heads above the fireplace . . . For the thousandth time she asked her heart the question: Are we really in love, Jean-Louis and I?—But whatever answer there was was drowned out by the frantic galloping of her heart. And *bump*! the wheels touched down.

She lifted her chin, her eyes shining with sheer joy. Even as she walked out of the plane, down the steps, she could swear she could smell Paris! The smell and the *feel* of it all—the whole lovely, exciting city, Cinzano clinking and winking, the frost on the bare trees in the Bois de Boulogne, the tramps sleeping like (*Continued on page* 66)

Haute couture of the twenties

the Grand Duchess

West Indian lovely

# Fancy Dress Affair

By JULIE HARRIS

As a successful film costume designer, Julie Harris, who dressed the cast of the recent film *The Seekers*, answers the problem of something different to wear at a fancy dress party

ALTHOUGH I spend most of my life designing costumes for all types of film stars for every sort of rôle, whenever I am asked to a fancy dress party my first thought is that of most other people. "What on earth shall I wear?"

But however unprofessional I am about my own plans, when it comes to thinking up and making costumes for my friends I am irrepressible. Nothing damps my enthusiasm, no effect is too ambitious and nothing impossible. This is because I am a great believer in "dressing-up" and I think we should have many more carnivals and fêtes and excuses for make-believe and escaping from practical and rather dreary workaday clothes.

Here is where my job as a designer for films comes in useful. So often I have to create effects larger than life, clothes more elaborate and more glamorous than could ever be seen outside of the fantasy of films.

Or I might find myself at the other end of the world with practically no materials on hand, and only a few days in which to dress the characters in a costume film. This happened in New Zealand recently when we had to make costumes for the Maoris as they were worn 150 years ago. In some cases we were reduced to using sugar-bags and the women's skirts of coloured drinking-straws strung on cord so that they rustled in the required rhythm for the ceremonial dances.

I mention all this just to show that "dressing-up" must always depend on resourcefulness and imagination whether for a costly film or for a New Year's Eve Ball at the local town-hall.

The point I want to make is, that the films provide a great scope for ideas for fancy dress and that there is no need to stick to the hackneyed ideas of dressing as a Spanish dancer or a gipsy if you happen to be brunette and a Dutch girl if you are blonde. Why not take inspiration from the colourful West Indies with fruit or flower-laden head-dress and bright-hued petticoats, or the Maori costumes I have already mentioned, or the alluring harem-dancers from *You Know What Sailors Are* which you can make by wearing a bikini swim-suit as a foundation underneath a gauze tunic slit up to the knees in front and the usual gaudy bangles and beads and ear-rings—all suitable for dark-haired girls. If you are a blonde you can fix yourself up as a Viking girl similar to a film-costume I designed (*Continued on page* 70)

# Place to Place

Mrs. Weston has her younger sister Marion to spend Christmas. Married to a Scottish farmer, Marion concentrates on few, high-quality, hard-wearing, good-looking outfits. A lively thirty-five, she infallibly achieves the balance between teen-age and older styles. She wears *left* a reversible coat of white wool and proofed black gaberdine. By Ledux, it is available also in camel and gaberdine; 18½ gns. at Harvey Nichols; Rackhams, Birmingham. Mrs. Weston's snug, velvety wrap-round coat is of grey Embros lamb by Tescan, about 38 gns. at Selfridges; Brunel Models, Brighton

Underneath, Marion was wearing her new scarlet sweater suit, the long jersey accentuating the hipline . . . for Paris has had its say : The sweater suit is by Rima, about £12 5s. at Finnigans ; Chanelle, Bournemouth. Also in black, blue, green. Mrs. Weston's dress is from a Dior design, in cosy, lightweight wool angora mixture, with crisp revers controlled by a single important button, and a flurry of walk-easy pleats at the centre back ; in that smartest of all colours, anthracite—for whatever they say about grey, it will never be replaced. By Rembrandt, 8½ gns. at D. H. Evans ; County Clothes, Cheltenham

# Chosen for

For her Alps holiday, Delia chose expertly-cut ski trousers in black; with them, a hefty Swiss sweater having startling stripes on the front and a plain back. Both by Londonus, "Snowfit" trousers £12 at Lillywhites; Kimptons, Newport: sweater £11 at Watson & Mitchell, Manchester

For after-ski, a scarlet jacket with attached lynx cape-into-hood collar, and charcoal grey slim skirt with pleats that can be released at will. Jacket by Spectator Sports, about 29 gns. at Simpsons; John Moses, Newcastle. Skirt by Maxwelle Originals, £6 19s. 6d. at Harrods

# Winter Warmth

One advantage of "sacrificing" a summer holiday to a winter one is that the clothes bought are useful for longer in the English year. To wear on Continental expresses, and later back home to see her through a wet or cold spring, Delia gave herself a Christmas present of a travel coat in proofed wool tweed. If you can only take one—here it is, made in blue, grey, green or brown mixtures. Tolemac "Clyde," 8½ gns. at Swan & Edgar; and at Bon Marche, Gloucester

Bright, workmanlike dress in creaseless grey rayon for unlimited hotel lounging. The effect is of a two-piece: severe sweater top teamed with flamboyant colour-banded skirt. Delia will find it a perfect London dress after the holiday. By Sambo, 7½ gns. at Dickins & Jones; James Beatty, Wolverhampton

new colours. new

# Tips...

Three hats: one hairstyle—result, three distinctive heads. The basic style has a diagonal parting to distribute the hair evenly beneath the hats, and a fringe created over rollers to give a manageable "lift." The Red velvet theatre hat is by Edward Mann, 1 gn. at Swan & Edgar

# and Toes...

Here the crown hair has been swept forward to fringe the face with kiss curls. Its complement, a cocktail hat in sapphire blue velvet by Edward Mann, £1 9s. 11d. at Bourne & Hollingsworth; David Morgan, Cardiff. Our three heads were styled by Gillman from a Nichol Cold Wave

Third variation—deep cheek waves and a full petal fringe to frame a festive white straw calyx. By Edward Mann, £1 9s. 11d. at Bourne & Hollingsworth; Coulsons, Exeter. The Nichol Cold Wave costs from 2 gns. and is available throughout the country

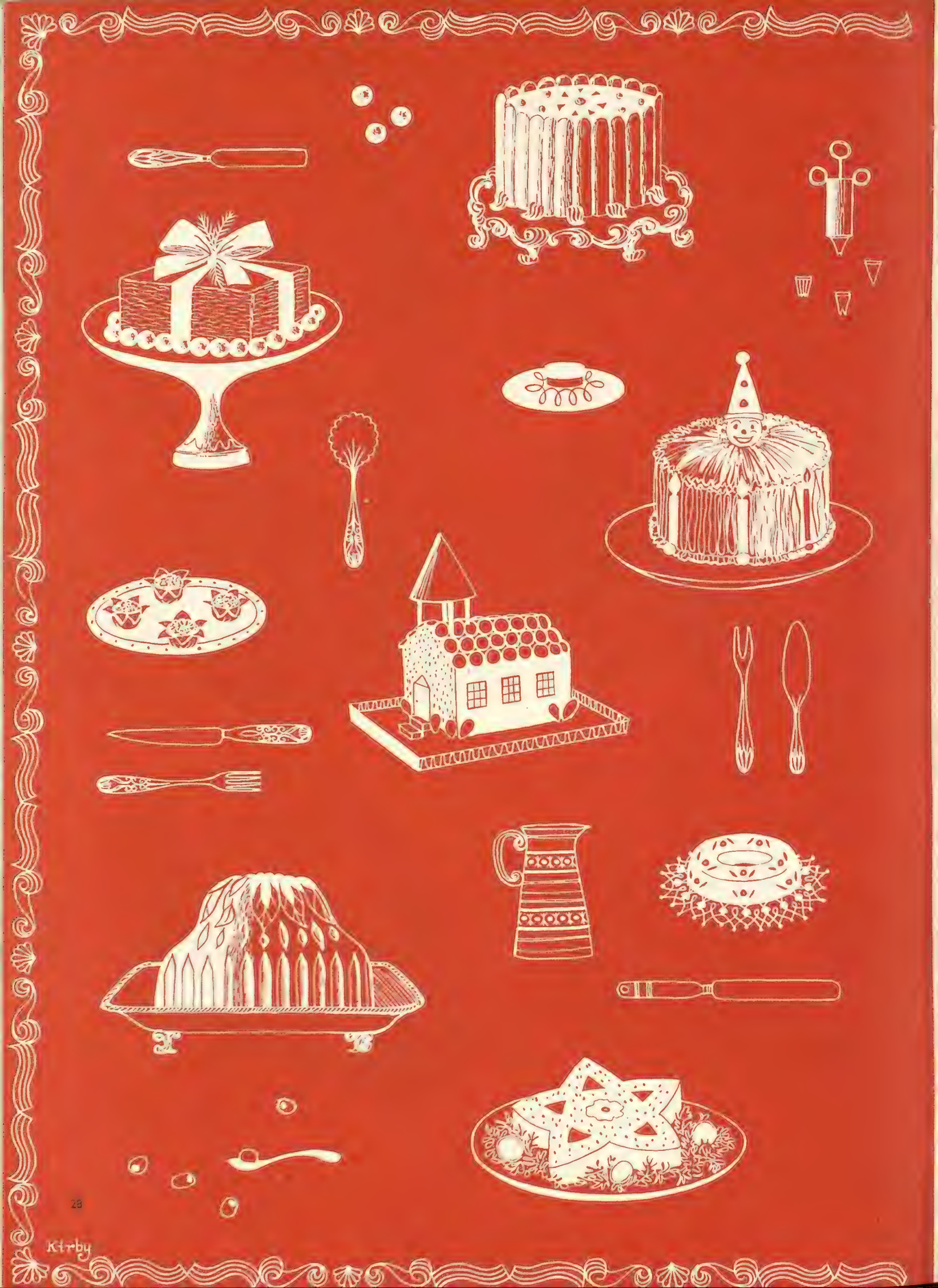
**some new shoes you will like to be in...exciting handbags in leathers, new shapes**

**P**arty slipper in silver or gold : the heel and closed back firm enough to negotiate steps from cars, the folded vamp slanting and graceful. £4 19s. 9d. from Dolcis. *Right :* calf handbag with hair-calf panel. In brown or black : boots are available to match, £6 5s. from Russell & Bromley

**H**eel interest in a black suede late day shoe, decorated with glistening jet studs. £4 17s. 6d. from Lotus. *Right :* a merry gift to receive at Christmas time—circular bag with slide-action opening. In cherry red calf, it is suitably named " La Ronde." £12 12s. from Russell & Bromley

**C**inderella's traditional slipper in modern idiom—a dainty dancing sandal, its straps woven from nylon and metal thread. In gold or silver, £3 9s. 9d. from Bective. *Right :* Black calf-skin bag for the myriad trifles a woman carries. £8 15s. from Russell & Bromley

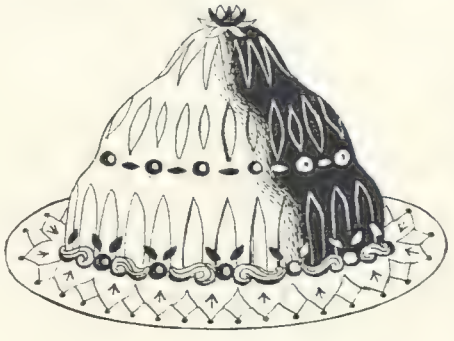
*Illustrations by PAT KENDRICK*


Kirby

# Finish with a . . .

# . . . *flourish!*

*Decorating the cake is part of the Christmas tradition . . . here are some ideas on the subject of garnishes, generally . . .*

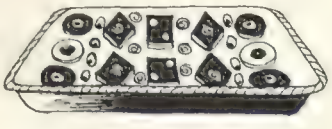


CHRISTMAS is the one time of the year when no one will begrudge the time and effort involved in garnishing the food, so that it looks as palatable as it tastes. The Christmas cake, of course, usually comes in for most of the attention and on the opposite page we have sketched a few alternatives to the ubiquitous royal icing snow scene with tobogganing Father Christmases.

It may not be wise to stray from the standard round cake-tin for anything as temperamental as a rich Christmas fruit cake mixture, so we have suggested two decorations for the round cake. One has a paling of sponge fingers piped at the base with icing whirls, standing on a silver cake stand. The other is a more elaborate carnival scheme in pink and white icing. The clown's head can be made of a ball of marzipan covered with royal icing with a paper cone for a hat, the candles fashioned from angelica strips and flames from glacé cherries.

Varying the shape of the cake immediately opens up all kinds of decorative possibilities. Fancy shaped cake-tins are obtainable, but cake-tin forms can be made at home for ambitious set-pieces like a bluebird (actually a rather squat spade shape), or a snow man (two circles, a small and large, one on top of the other). The baking shapes for these "tins" can be made out of strips of stout cardboard covered with aluminium foil. Cut the card in strips as wide as the cake is to be deep, and bend it so that it follows the outline of the design (scoring the card to make sharp neat corners and angles). Staple the ends of the card together and then cover with aluminium foil so that it is entirely protected from the heat of the oven. The aluminium foil can be obtained for little more than a shilling a square foot. The foil-covered shape is now put on a baking-sheet and filled with the cake mixture in the usual way.

There are two suggestions for a (*Continued on page* 74)



KIRBY

# Tubby

*He looked like a Sealyham all right on him"*

By T. O. BEACHCROFT

Castle Drumcastle,
4 April.

DEAR MA AND PA,

Well, I'm here. My various aunts, uncles, cousins, second cousins, and cousins once or twice removed, all seem to be flourishing and send you their love. So many people have said to me, "Hullo—you must be Sara," that I am quite befogged. My face is assuming a rather frightened ready-to-be-kissed-by-utter-strangers look. I even prepared myself to be kissed by the horses when we visited the stables. I have a feeling this is going to be a very horsey holiday indeed. In fact I think I already have a clearer picture of the horses, fourteen of them, than of the human beings.

I arrived very tired, having travelled half-way round old Ireland on a bus. I was sitting in quite a dazed sort of way at tea trying to find out which were my relations and which were their friends, when dear old Cousin Freddie said in front of the assembly :

"Of course you ride?"

Before I had time to answer a rather wild-looking

# Horse

*of the horse world—"You'll be they told her*

*Illustration by BERTOGLIO*

creature with unkempt dark locks said,

"Don't be so damsilly, Daddy. What do you take her for?"

This was Petronella. I know now that both she and Cousin Freddie were trying to make me feel at home : but at once everyone began staring at me, and I had to say :

"Well, I'm not a good rider. In London one simply doesn't get the chance. I can just about ride—but that's all. So please give me something tame."

About forty eyes bored through me while I uttered. In this family they simply don't understand that one might not be a good rider.

However, Cousin Freddie said kindly : "That's all right, Sara, my dear. You can ride Tubby horse. You'll be all right on him."

Then everybody shouted with laughter, and there were a lot of remarks about this animal. Sometimes they called him "Tubby horse," sometimes "Old Tubby" and quite often "that swine Tubby." He seemed to be quite a family joke

After tea some of them (*Continued on page* 70)

*This is the season to admit*

*frankly that when it comes to*

# Guys and Dolls

*you will never grow out of*

*your childhood's delight in them*

By JOYCE ASSER

A doll to dress in Mexican costume with lace headdress and sequin-spangled blouse and frilled skirt. The Hawaiian doll above comes from Hamley's

Above is a teacosy masquerading as a black mama doll with a basket of oranges and, left, a Spanish gipsy in flounced skirt, fringed shawl and flowers in her hair

ANY excuse is better than no excuse for collecting dolls. Some women cover their weakness for them by making the dolls' voluminous skirts do practical duty as tea cosies, telephone covers, nightdress covers and the like. Others just frankly admit their childish delight in dolls and dignify the objects of their affection with the title of "my collection." Then the engaging little creatures can make their own claim to existence as pure decoration, brightening a cabinet in a dark corner of the living-room, or sitting in absurd state along a window sill.

Some people buy dolls, some people make them. Both systems have their fascination. But making dolls perhaps gives the greatest scope for personal taste and ingenuity. There are all the lovely historical costumes and national dresses from which to get inspiration for the dolls' clothes.

Dolls are easily made provided the instructions given with the toy patterns are carefully followed. Accuracy is essential when cutting out and sewing the pieces together, because the scale is so small. Flesh-coloured felt or pink calico is good for the bodies. A good range of felts are generally available in any needlework shop or department store. Dryad's of Leicester and London will accept post orders as they publish a catalogue where you can find everything you need for doll making.

The stuffing of the doll is very important. Kapok is often used, but cotton wool will do, and if you live in the country you may be able to obtain raw sheep wool. Washed and dried it is most suitable for stuffing. Dolls must be firmly stuffed otherwise they lose their shape. A knitting needle or long pencil is very useful for pushing down the filling. Hands, feet, legs and arms are stuffed first, lastly the body. Always leave the bottom of the legs open to insert the feet and the neck to insert the head. There is usually an opening at the side which you sew up on the completion of the stuffing.

If you doubt your ability to embroider the dolls' features on to the face, you can always buy moulded faces, which are called doll's masks. These are sewn on to the head and the join covered by the hair.

Many toy shops and handicraft shops sell packets of dolls' hair in several shades. When putting on the hair, take the plait from the packet, spread it out smoothly on a piece of tissue paper to the required width and machine down the centre to make a parting, tearing the paper away afterwards. Attach the hair to the head along the parting.

The doll made, then comes the fascination of dressing it.

The three dolls on the left of this page can be dressed quite easily. The Jamaican negress holding the basket of oranges is really a tea cosy. You require only the doll's body to the waist made in brown felt or velvet. The brown velvet mask came from Dryad's. The hair in this case was made from black knitting wool and small brass curtain rings the ear-rings. The basket was made from plaited raffia, mounted on a cardboard base 1 in. in diameter. The oranges were made in sections of felt similar to the sections of a beach ball, sewn together and stuffed. Use white lawn (*Continued on page* 78)

Dolls in every mood and in all degrees of elegance. The dignified Victorian lady dressed in handmade clothes of authentic period detail comes from Harrods. So do the flaxen-haired character in Austrian costume and the doll in print dress and fichu, one of a "Little Women" family of five, Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy and their mother. Cinderella, the pirate and the Scotch piper are from Hamley's

Photograph by Deighton Wikes

# FESTIVELY FLORAL

*A chaplet of laurel and holly to hang at the front door is easy and inexpensive to make. The winter composition, right, is designed for a pewter jug*

# SUIT *the* SEASON

by D. R. BEBB, F.R.H.S.

CHRISTMAS decorations for the house are generally a last-minute affair but they can still be beautiful and gay. My designs for the decorations pictured here are not difficult to make nor will they cost much.

The Christmas table calls for a special effort, using the cherished silver and most attractive china. The table centrepiece must be colourful without stealing the limelight from the appointments. It must be low, so that we see our opposite dining partner over the top. A good plan when doing any table decoration is to do it sitting down; this way you get the effect as it is seen by the diners and the right height.

The colour picture shows a floral centrepiece of carnations, either cream and scarlet or all one colour; some short, spiky foliage, yew or carnation grass, and two small oblong dishes. Pyrex dishes or Denby ware look well, but two small baking tins from the stores can be painted silver or white, as an alternative. To hold the blooms securely use some rolled up wire netting, held in place with a length of fine twine, passed over and round the dishes and then tied securely but inconspicuously. The centre "handle" is a circle of wire; if you have an embroidery ring, this answers admirably. Cover this with cotton-wool and bind it evenly with silver ribbon or red and white crêpe paper intertwined with tinsel strips.

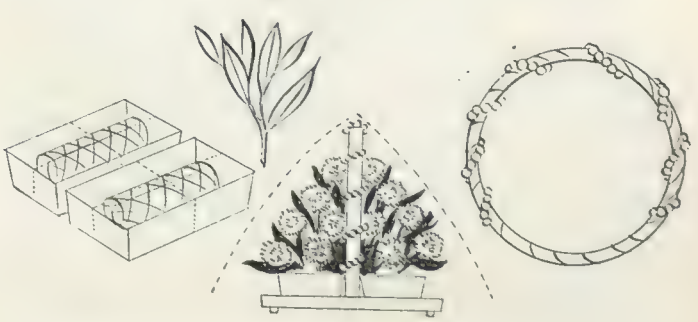
Give the flowers a long drink beforehand, and then place them in the two dishes at the angles suggested by the diagram at the foot of the page. You may need to cut quite a lot off the stems, how much depends on the height you feel is right in proportion to the size of the "handle," the dishes and your table. The Christmas table does not often allow for a large and elaborate flower decoration, but this one is colourful and attractive, yet takes up little space. The diagram suggests the approximate lengths of stems and the angles for insertion of the blooms and the foliage. Spaced carefully, you can manage with a dozen blooms, but if they are on the small side, a few more are an advantage.

When the flowers are set, place the two dishes together with the "handle" gripped tightly between. Our colour photograph shows the ring entwined with silver ribbon and red shining beads. The whole arrangement is set on two silvered cake boards, but, of course, this is optional.

The chaplet or "kissing ring" to hang at the front door is quickly made; it does just as well in the house hung on a wall or under an arch with mistletoe. To make it, get a small hoop or a wire ring, a few pennyworth of moss from your florist, some large, dark green (*Continued on page* 84)

***The moss-covered ring on which the chaplet is based and, right of it, the leaves placed tip to tail. The smaller sketches show the method of attaching the leaves to the ring and the ribbon bow and the berries to the base with bent hairpins***

***The two dishes for the flower arrangement in colour are shown with rolls of chicken wire tied down with fine twine to support the flower stems. Right of these is the decorated ring which is set between the two containers to make a "handle"***



By
MARGERIE SCOTT

*Illustrations by*
*SAWYER*

"It's all too much for me," she said, reaching into the pocket of her husband's shirt for a cigarette

"OF course the only thing to do," Susan said, frowning at the columns of figures which as usual at this time in the month seemed to have acquired a life of their own and to be refusing to allow themselves to be balanced, "the *only* thing to do is for you to divorce me and marry a female chartered accountant, or perhaps a very rich woman, so that it wouldn't matter if she wasn't very clever about money."

"Drastic," Jim said, "but it's an idea." He ran an affectionate finger down the bridge of her nose. "Or you could divorce me and marry a rich man. A tycoon."

"What *is* a tycoon?" Susan asked, interested.

"If you married one, you'd find out," Jim said.

"I don't think I should like it," Susan shovelled bills, cashbook and cheque-book into an untidy heap on the beautiful antique desk that had been a wedding-present from Uncle Al, and reached into the pocket of her husband's shirt for a cigarette. "I like being married to you really, it's only that all this," she indicated the pile on the desk with a motion of her dark head, "is too much for me."

"It seems to be too much for me, too," Jim said, suddenly serious.

"Never mind, darling." Susan jumped up and kissed him. "We'll manage, we always do. I'll make some coffee, shall I? I guess we can still afford that."

"Just," Jim said, and there was a note in his voice that Susan didn't quite like.

"I'll tell you what," she said, continuing the joke, "let's both divorce each other and marry rich people, and then when they've settled nice big sums of money on us, we can marry each other again!"

"We should have to get a couple more divorces to do

# Highway to Heartbreak

**It was absurd not to tell Jim, of course, but to Susan there was no other solution to the problem**

that," Jim objected, going along with her and Susan waved her hand airily and said that it was only the first one that was difficult, after that the rest came easy.

For a second she considered adding: "Or, of course, I *could* go back to work," but knew that this would immediately change the joking conversation into something serious, because Jim belonged to the "I-can-support-my-own-wife-thank-you" school of thought, which Susan privately thought was as out-of-date as an Edwardian hair-do.

The difficulty seemed to be the incomprehensible fact that Susan, who had managed her own affairs competently enough while she was assistant to the head of the Hayward Museum's Rare Book Department, appeared to be quite unable to manage their joint affairs after she married him, and, of course, there were the added facts that the quiet little wedding they were going to have, followed by the quiet little honeymoon and by their return to a quiet little apartment conveniently near the Hayward Museum had all got out of hand.

Susan's relations, who consisted of two aunts, an uncle and a few cousins, emerged from the vague background of her life and insisted that she have the sort of wedding they believed her dead parents would have wanted her to have. After that, as Jim had remarked moodily, it was just one antique table after another, and no apartment big enough to house them all.

The house on Stratton Drive was perfect, Aunt Emily Rose said firmly, and if it *was* rather a long way out, well, it would simply mean that they would have to have two cars, because it wasn't reasonable to suppose that Susan could be stuck out there all day with no means of transport.

Aunt Lily Jane said that if she gave Susan a car for a

combined wedding-present and all her birthdays and Christmases for ever after, amen, it would save a lot of trouble all round, and Jim said a bit too smoothly that it only remained now for Uncle Al to give her the car's upkeep and everything would be all right. Uncle Al, however, donated the antique desk which they both hated, partly because it was too big and important-looking for their living-room, and partly because it was the scene of their monthly battle with the accounts.

The aunts and Uncle Al, having launched their niece's marriage in a style which her new husband could not hope to keep up, retired into their vague and comfortable backgrounds, leaving the young couple holding, so to speak, the bills.

At the end of six months, Susan suggested that she might go back to work, which brought about the first of Jim's "I-can-support-my-own-wife" pronouncements. At the end of the first year, she mentioned it again, and this time, faced with mounting expenses and the eminently reasonable nature of his young wife's suggestion, Jim lost his temper so thoroughly, and such a spectacular scene raged through the pretty, expensive little house, that Susan, shaken, took a firm vow never to mention it again.

SHE brought the coffee, and set it on the beautiful antique table, which one of the cousins had given them, and which had set the tone of their living-room a good bit higher up the scale than they had at first intended.

"Darling," Susan said, when she had given him his cup, "I do try, but it seems that everything has got so much more expensive since we were married."

"In two years?" Jim asked. "In only two years?"

"Darling, *yes*." Her brown eyes were wide and serious. "Ask *anyone*. And really this house does cost a lot to run, you know."

"I know," Jim said, frowning. He was as fair as Susan was dark, which had the effect of making him look younger than she was, instead of four years older, but lately Susan had thought anxiously that he was looking older and more serious.

He twisted his coffee-cup on its saucer and said carefully, as if it were something he had been rehearsing:

"I suppose we could give the house up and find an apartment nearer the museum? If we did that, we could give up the other car, too."

"The aunts would be dreadfully hurt if we did," Susan told him, "and anyway, there wouldn't be room for all the furniture, especially Uncle Al's desk and Cousin Royden's coffee-table."

"You kept very dark about all these rich relations of yours, didn't you, Sue?" Jim said. It didn't come out quite right, or perhaps it was the expression on his face as as he said it, and Susan flinched and gave him a startled glance.

"I know what you think," she said in a low voice. "You've hinted at it often enough. You think the aunts started us off in the wrong way."

"Not at all," Jim said politely. "I merely think it would have been a help to know that I was marrying into this atmosphere of—of oppressive luxury."

"I'm sorry," Susan said, her voice stiff. "I suppose they thought they were helping us."

"I'm sure they did," Jim said savagely, "and I bet they'll bury us in gold-handled coffins if they get the chance."

Susan gave a little cry and ran out of the room, her hands over her face.

EVEN then, and in spite of the fact that for the first time since they were married she pretended to be asleep when he came up to bed, it might have ended there if Susan hadn't run into Perry Edwards the next day when she was making an unsuccessful attempt to park her car in a space too short for it. Perry was a business friend of Cousin Royden's, and he leaned in at the window of the car, laughed at her flushed, angry face, told her to move over, and got in behind the wheel.

"Now," he said, "first we'll go and have lunch, and I'll

show you—and really, Susan, you ought to know by now—how to park a car."

"I haven't time," Susan said. "I'm going shopping."

"Later," Perry said calmly. "Don't be tiresome, Susan. I've got a job for you."

"A job?" She sounded so delighted that Perry glanced at her in surprise.

"You sound pleased," he said. "I thought I might have to do some persuading, but you sound as if you *want* a job."

"Oh, I do, Perry," Susan began and then, remembering Jim, she added more calmly: "It's just that sometimes, you know, I miss the work at the museum."

The job, Perry told her a few minutes later, when, their order for lunch given and the frostiest of Martinis on the table before them, he realized that Susan simply couldn't wait another minute, was to sort and catalogue a small library which a friend of his had bought and shipped from an old house in England. Some of the books were valuable and some were in a deplorable condition. Perry's friend, whose name was Eustace Watkins, wanted to get a clear picture of what he really had bought, and he was willing to pay well for expert work.

Susan seemed the ideal person for the job; she would work in Eustace's own house, where two top-floor rooms were temporarily given over to his new acquisition.

"I'll do it, Perry, I'd love to," Susan told him, "but I don't want Jim to know."

"You don't want. . . . Now why on earth not?" Perry frowned at her. "Look here, Susan. I'm not going to be a party to any deceit of that sort."

"Please, Perry, it's important—I'll tell him later, but just now, I really don't want him to know, and please Perry, don't tell *anyone*, and especially not Cousin Royden, because you know how it is in my family, everyone tells everyone everything."

"All right," Perry said heavily, "but your Cousin Royden won't like it."

"Oh, bother Cousin Royden, *and* the aunts! It's really their fault, and now I have to deceive Jim to put it right," Susan said crossly, and Perry stared at her as if he thought she had gone out of her mind, and might after all not be at all a suitable person to introduce into the decorous household of Mr. Eustace Watkins.

Her new employer startled her, on her first appearance at his house, by not looking at all studious or bookish. He was tall and brisk.

He received her in a business-like study which had two telephones on the desk and a Dictaphone beside it; he told her exactly what he wanted her to do and added that he proposed to leave her to get on with it; he almost caused her to run out of the room at once by suggesting that if she ran into any difficulty she might ring up the rare book department of the Hayward Museum!

"A tycoon," Susan told herself as she climbed to the top floor. "Now I know what it is. It's *him*!" In exactly three and a half (*Continued on page* 76)

The book caught Eustace square in the face, knocking off his glasses

# Christmas Reading

by TREVOR ALLEN

Thrills, action and intrigue from Dennis Wheatley (left)—in his new novel *The Island Where Time Stands Still*

CHRISTMAS warmth, friends, parties . . . then a fireside book redolent of the fabled East from which the Wise Men came and to which the not always wise women went for adventure? Yes, I for one could not wish a better present this year than Lesley Blanch's **"The Wilder Shores Of Love"** (Murray, 15s.), the dazzling story of four exotics who found love, or at least fulfilment, in barbaric quests. Aimée Dubucq de Rivery, kidnapped by Barbary corsairs while homing from convent school, landed in a Grand Turk's harem and became Sultan's favourite. Naughty Jane Digby, Lady Ellenborough, expiated countless European *affaires* and three marriages as wife of a Syrian desert sheikh. Impulsive Isabelle Eberhardt thudded off into the Sahara in Arab garb and found simplicity, piety, squalor, death in a flood—Isabel Burton, wife of the Orientalist, sought with him all the strange magic of *Tancred*. Here is feminine escapism at its finest and maddest, with brilliant Eastern background : a captivating quartet.

None of these got as far east as John Coast, Singapore p.o.w. who was sent to Burma, worked in Java after the war, married a Javanese girl and became interested in Balinese dancing. **"Dancing Out Of Bali"** (Faber, 21s.) is an elegant book recording his reactions to the art, the people, the country, and to taking a troupe of forty to London and New York. Changing into European dress had its problems, for as one in the party said of another : "When Sarog went to Paris in 1931, Tuan, nobody showed him how to untie his tie ; so he kept it on, night and day, for over two weeks." With this as a gift one could go nicely native—but only in the dancing, which is vividly photographed.

Any who cherish, even in a cheap Pan, Lord David Cecil's *The Young Melbourne*, the story of his marriage with crazy Caro Lamb, will welcome **"Lord M."** (Constable, 21s.), the account of his later life as statesman and adviser to the young Victoria. He came to love her, yet had to step aside when she married Albert and accepted uncomplainingly a minor rôle. There was deep poignancy in his awareness that something intimate and exquisite was passing from his life, and his emotions are portrayed here with a sensitive understanding. This is formal biography at its best—equable, unstrained, quietly illuminating.

Godfrey Winn's biographies—about famous women like Gracie Fields, Lady Mountbatten, Mrs. R. A. Butler, wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and obscure wives, workers and prison girls up and down the country—are tabloids, but expert reportage. On a visit to Capri he asked Boris what made him marry Gracie. "It was her charm," he said. "You see, she is so natural. . . . She is not one person when she is alone, and another when there are other people present. . . . For twenty years I had lived in my own small apartment, (*Continued on page* 80)

RICH UNCLE

THE annual arrival of **"The Saturday Book"** (Hutchinson, 25s.) is like the visit of a rich, cultured, well-dressed uncle laden with choice gifts for the whole family. No. 14, edited by John Hadfield, includes, pictorially, the Art of Beauty through the ages, paintings of the Constable family, the Natural (or quaintly unnatural) History of the Chorus Girl, Fatty Arbuckle, Russian architecture, notable Ceilings and Floors, Dried Flower Decoration, Trade Signs, Pottery Figures, Strange Inventions, with the usual expert articles, stories, poems. You can't go wrong with this present, for there's something for all, and just holding it makes one feel a thousand-a-year better off.

WHILE Napoleon was rampaging across Europe Pierre-Joseph Redouté was making history in his own way—painting roses. As events thundered about him the genius of botanical art captured and preserved the fragrant essence of all summers in a prodigious series of pictures. **"Les Roses"** were a sensation then, today they are collector's pieces, and we must be indebted to the Ariel Press for the superb reproduction in colour of twenty-four selected plates from the original folio. Such a series of excellent reproductions for framing at 25s. represents a fraction of the cost of one of the original works.

"Love to baby-sit for us one ever. . . ."

# AS OTHERS SEE IT!

by

JOHN STANTON

*Illustrations by SHEILA WHITBY*

***A time of junketing and financial outlay that coincides with quarter day—a "Scrooge" sets out to see if his contemporaries agree with him!***

OUR trouble is that we are a couple of Scrooges—in theory. "Christmas for grown-ups is a lot of hooey," we say. "Where is the sense in a financial hangover that hangs over until June all on account of a couple of days' junketing which happen to coincide with Quarter Day? This year, there is going to be an alteration," we tell ourselves sternly. "We'll have a quiet Christmas. No dust trap decorations. No "open house" nonsense (*we* can't afford to drink ourselves) no expensive presents (it's the *thought* that counts). And *this* year let one of the others have Aunt Rachel."

And so it goes . . . until Christmas, then the scramble begins. "The tree. We must have a tree." Last year's tree ornaments are broken so we rush out for a few more . . . ("pity to spoil the ship"). . . . You can't have a tree without some holly and mistletoe. (The cheap boughs without the berries look awfully mean) . . . "get just a couple of bottles of sherry, in case, and a bottle of gin. George never touches sherry." Then there is Aunt Rachel on the phone. "What are we doing for Christmas?" meaning what is *she* doing. "Poor old darling . . . it seems so unkind not to. . . ."

In fact we are just fairly typical. It's the perennial Christmas problem. Who knows the answers? Does anybody? As the newspapers say, we conducted a public opinion poll to see what others think. More simply, we put some leading questions to some willing guinea pigs : couples in different circumstances and with different outlooks. Here is the result :

"Hate it if you know they could have done better"

"Just don't know how to whip up a party of their own . . ."

*Christmas is a very expensive time and we suffer for half the year in consequence. Is it a proper expression of the Christmas spirit to impoverish ourselves, or just bad economics? Our guinea pigs for this question were a couple with two boys at boarding school.*

HE : Sheer bad economics. More food and drink than I can digest never quite banish the sinking feeling I get at the thought of the reckoning. I know I can't afford it and that makes me resentful. Where is the goodwill in that? It's a vicious circle. You give presents because people give them to you. Nobody has the courage to default. Whether they know it or not, half the people who overspend at Christmas do so from the wrong motives. Others are doing it and they are afraid to be left out.

SHE : If only you were always as logical. Of course, there is no logical argument for overspending except that it seems impossible not to. Anyway, if you stop to think what you can afford nowadays it's nothing. Christmas is fun. We grumble about it, but we enjoy it. We throw off our inhibitions and spread ourselves about and make generous gestures and even if there is an element of compulsion in it we do it—and that's a good thing. Christmas is a major expense, so you have to budget for it. Unless you are a real Scrooge you can't be left out. Who really wants to be?

*For the next question we buttonholed a young couple with a baby. "Does goodwill extend to entertaining Aunt Rachel, who has nowhere to go unless it's to you because, let's face it, she is a bit cantankerous and doesn't really fit into our circle?*

HE : No. A sense of duty is a bleak sort of virtue. Aunt Rachel doesn't fit, she is not interested in our friends. We can't help regarding her as our good deed, and the old girl knows it. Anyway, why does it always have to be us. Let the rest of the family take a turn.

SHE : We shall be old ourselves one day. I expect I shall be an Aunt Rachel myself, then what? What does it matter if she doesn't fit in with our friends. Let them put up with it for once, it's Christmas and the picture isn't complete without the older people. She will love to baby-sit for us one evening, and that's *her* good deed. Other members of the family should take their turn, but they don't. Well, that's a matter for their own consciences. It is such a trifling sacrifice to make to give the old lady pleasure.

*What do you feel about spending Christmas at an hotel? We asked a pair of young marrieds, both professional people.*

HE : Home is the place to be at Christmas. Think of an hotel lounge tricked up with fairy lights . . . a crowd of complete strangers making embarrassed efforts to be matey. You have to be sociable whether you like them or not, and who, in their senses, would put an hotel meal in place of the Christmas feast at your own table?

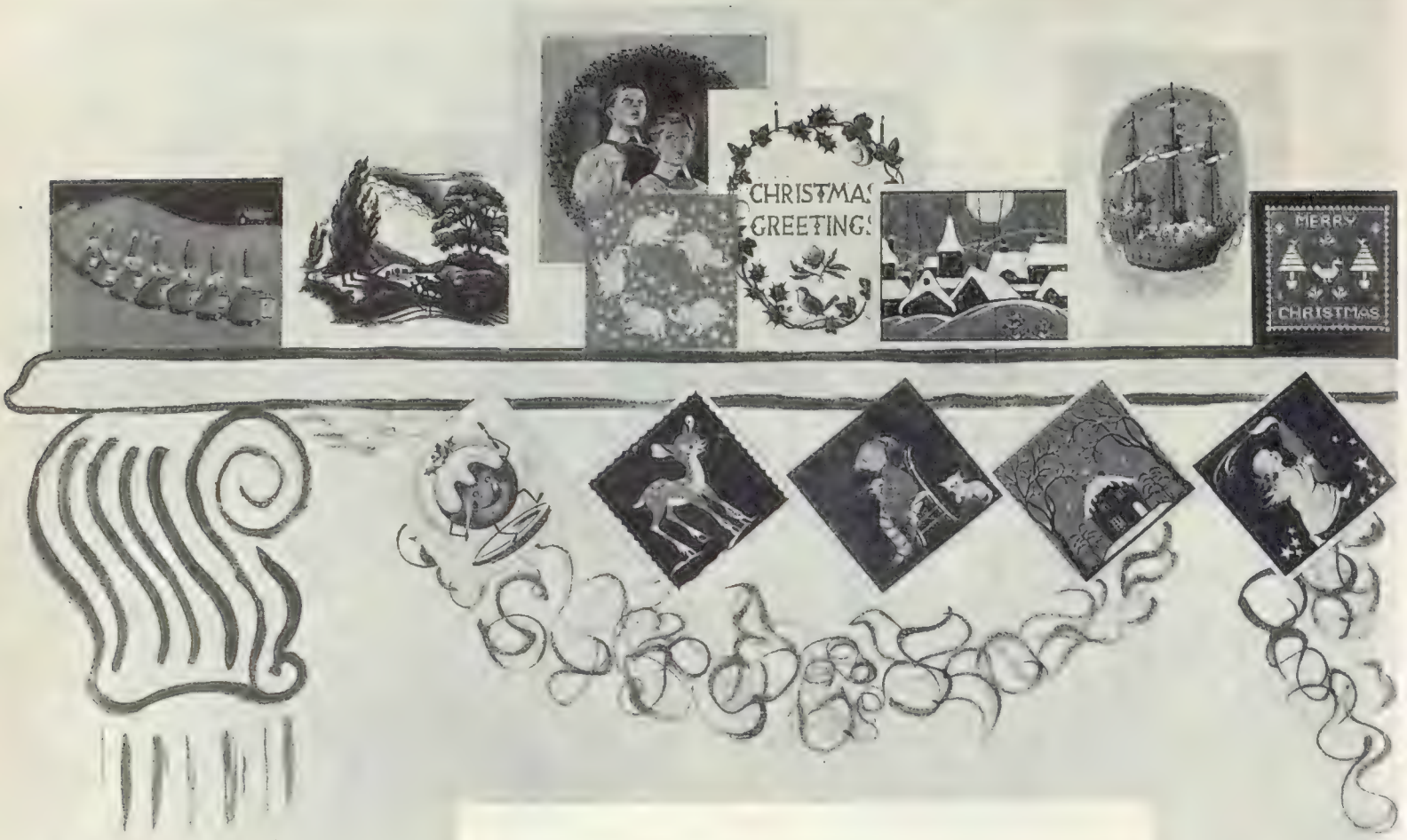
SHE : Well, of course, you have nothing to do at Christmas but stuff and then fall asleep over the fire. Christmas at home is pretty hard work and fine theories about preparing in advance don't work out when you are in an office. Anyway a "proper" Christmas to me means children, and the tree and roast chestnuts. It is a family affair, and as our family doesn't stretch to it there is no point in trying. Some cheerful company and others to do the work can't fail with me.

*Is it* really *the thought that counts with Christmas presents? We popped the question to a couple who admit that unwanted gifts form a nucleus of their own presents for next year.*

HE : Wasn't it Bernard Shaw who said, "Never do as you would be done by—their tastes may be different." How true. It's the thought that counts only when the recipient knows that *real* thought and true goodwill have inspired the gift. If somebody gives you a plastic cake basket with a squiggly handle when your tastes run to contemporary design you will hate it if you know they could have done better. Goodwill comes in when the gift has thought and a little personal sacrifice behind it, even if it is only the sacrifice of time to find the right thing.

SHE : I like that from one who always leaves the choosing of the presents to me. All the same, I do agree. People should have what they want, not what we think they should have.

*Do you believe in importing the Christmas spirit by way of radio and television "parties" or are you of the school who thinks that you should make* *(Continued on page 78)*




# People on my Mantel Piece

By MICHAEL SHERIDAN

POSTERITY, finding our family address book—assuming, quite unreasonably, the slightest interest at all on the part of posterity—will no doubt call in experts to decipher the mysterious hieroglyphics that appear against certain entries. They may—happy thought!—even regard them as possible indications of blackmailing activities.

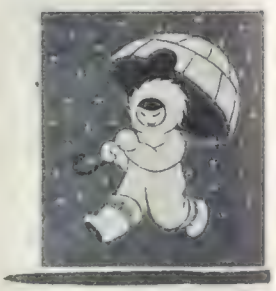
Certainly, they'll scarcely guess that the scrawled "C. C." after a name stands for nothing more sinister than "Christmas Card." Nor that this was merely a vain attempt to avoid the perennial humiliation of having to send New Year cards to those who sent us Christmas cards but whom we forgot.

It seemed simple enough. If we labelled all those from whom we had cards we could at least return the gesture next year. What we failed to notice was that we were doomed, so to speak, to live perpetually a year in the red since one cannot decently go round telling friends in January that they are down for a card next Christmas. And since the list changes from year to year there is no hope of ever balancing the account.

So it is that early December finds us, like ordinary mortals who never had a brainwave, poring happily over scrappy little lists that, in the end, are always defeated by the one card no imagination could be expected to foresee. It's all rather like a variation on Happy Families: "Have you got Cousin Jane?" "No, but I've got the Blinkington-Smythes—and don't forget Aunt Alice."

As a kind of *aide-mémoire* there overflows around us an untidy stack of last year's cards. For to throw them away or even to send them to the hospital until there's another batch to take their place always seems a trifle ungracious, like discarding the people they represent: people who, in a sense, once dwelt for a brief spell on our mantelpiece.

Is it unseasonable to admit (*Continued on page* 82)



Christmas Greetings
Happy Christmas
CHRISTMAS

Photograph by Deighton Wilkes

***It is a tricky thing to please all tastes at a Christmas feast where the connoisseur of wine may be neighbour to a Philistine. P. M. Dixon disposes of the problem with a wide knowledge and malice towards none***

# Wine, women and guests

"SUPPOSE," I was asked, "you were giving a Christmas dinner party at which your guests included people with widely differing tastes in wine—an aunt who liked sweet Asti Spumante and an uncle who abhorred it, for example. What would you do?"

My first reaction was to say, "I would take care not to invite such an ill-assorted group to the same meal." But with relations and "musts" at Christmastime one often has no choice. My second reaction was to discover the favourite tipple of each guest and to plant a bottle of it on the table before them. But this is a coward's way out—and expensive, too.

So I started to give the problem some serious thought.

Now broadly, in terms of wine-drinking, there are really only two categories of people—those who like the very dry wines and those who prefer the slightly sweeter varieties. If a person wants to drink a really sickly wine like a sweet Sauterne throughout the meal they have no palate for wine and consequently it is not worth making special provision for them.

To meet both categories of taste, then, one can either select wines that will offend neither one nor the other—not too dry for the sweeter palate or too sweet for the dryer one—or, if you prefer, offer a choice throughout the meal.

Then, naturally, there is the matter of the cost. A great deal depends on how much you feel you can spend.

I will try and offer several solutions at varying price levels.

Let us start, however, with the assumption that as it is a Christmas party that we are talking about the menu will consist of an hors d'œuvre or entrée of some kind, roast turkey to follow, then sweet, cheese and coffee—or, if you prefer the French order of consumption which has much to recommend it—cheese first, then sweet and coffee.

We will begin, too, with the cheapest way to handle the dinner. Only in the case of the pre-dinner drinks will we offer any alternatives. Here I suggest a choice of a very dry Tio Pepe sherry and of a white Cinzano. Serve the latter also in sherry glasses, but if possible, let the vermouth have spent all day in the refrigerator and/or put a block of ice in each glass. Have some half slices of lemon ready and on serving, rub round the rim of the glass with a piece and drop it in.

Black olives and cashew nuts make a nice accompaniment to both drinks. At table serve a well-chilled white Soave—an Italian wine obtainable in Soho for 6s. 6d. a bottle—with the first course.

With the turkey serve a Real Retago, a Burgundy type Spanish wine with a lot of body and a real kick that will cheer your guests considerably. This is also obtainable in Soho at 6s. 6d. a bottle.

Both these wines should suit all palates. (*Continued on page* 76)

# DISCUSSION

*Christmas — that invincible mixture of Christian goodwill, Mithraic saturnalia and Charles Dickens overwhelms even the most cynical in the end*

Designer Tony Holland (*left*) took to ice as the proverbial duck to water. His latest *tour de force*, the most-lavish-ever *Aladdin*, opens at Wembley, December 16

Beside the new tradition of ice—the old tradition of staging *Hänsel And Gretel* at Christmastime. (*Right*) Marion Studholme, this year's charming Gretel in the 1954 production at Sadler's Wells

THE versatile young designer Tony Holland goes from strength to strength, and already has a long line of triumphs behind him. He literally touches nothing that he does not adorn, and the consistent success of the varied shows he has designed is no accident. He is very adaptable in style, and modest enough to allow the type of entertainment to dictate the tone of the décor.

The visual rightness of *Edward, My Son, The Cocktail Party* and *Hippo Dancing* was due to him; the ecstatic romantic worlds of the films *Lilacs In The Spring* and *King's Rhapsody* are his creation; and his exuberant variations on an idealized Austria in *The Dancing Years On Ice* have been delighting vast audiences at Wembley all summer.

He worked on the still more adventurous production *Aladdin On Ice*, on a film, and on a pantomime for Glasgow, *Goldilocks*, at the same time; is level-headed, casual, tidy : a dream to work with.

He lives in a small but exquisite Sloane Square flat, where connoisseur's pieces from many countries and centuries agree happily in the approval of their owner. He loves all things Italian, and is something of an Italianate cook. Soon he hopes to visit Austria where—despite *The Dancing Years*—he has never been.

Female form artistic: Beryl Grey makes a welcome return in Covent Garden's *Swan Lake*

Female form commercial: British fashion boom is based on textiles: Ardil blend coat by Koupy

# POINTS *of the* MONTH

THERE is a contemporary cartoon of Engelbert Humperdinck with Hänsel and Gretel each holding a hand, and they have certainly brought this *fin-de-siècle* German composer a familiar, endearing and undiminished fame from their first London appearance in 1895 right up to the present day.

Humperdinck loved and understood children. He lived a happy life, assured of a unique immortality, having composed "perhaps the only fine work in the operatic repertory to which one can take a child with the definite certainty of gratitude." *Hänsel And Gretel* is revived at Sadler's Wells on December 23.

CHILDREN form the only genuine international society, with absolute concentration on rock-bottom essentials: food, fun and sleep. For their more uneasy, escapist elders, here is a résumé of seasonable entertainment: a pantomime for parents at the New Watergate, wittiest of the club theatres: this year—*Arabian Nightmare*, starring Valerie Frazer. Produced by Ronnie Hill, the lyrics are by Julian More, music by Geoffrey Beaumont, whose last side-splitting effort was *Puss In Red Riding Breeches* in 1951. *Arabian Nightmare* opens December 16.

Two films . . . *Magnificent Obsession*, with Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson: about a girl who was blinded in an accident, and a playboy who saw the light. Released December 20.

*Beau Brummell*, with Peter Ustinov and Robert Morley. Released December 13.

ONE of the most charming, popular and talented of our ballerinas, Beryl Grey, makes an appropriate comeback in *Swan Lake* during the Christmas ballet season which opens at Covent Garden on December 13. She was the first to dance the Odette/Odile rôle in the revised, enlarged version of the ballet which was premièred before the Queen two years ago.

Since the birth of her daughter, and eighteen months' absence from the stage, Miss Grey has travelled to Finland as guest artist, and danced the *Swan Lake* lead in Helsinki. She is vividly remembered as a dancer who acts as naturally as she breathes.

THE Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers (why does couture at home and abroad adopt such ponderous titles?) sets the seal on a victorious year when its enterprising President, Lady Pamela Berry, invites the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret to a view of British Fashion on December 1. The setting will be Viscountess Camrose's house in Carlton House Terrace, and five models by each of the Society's twelve members will be shown. An important point is that all the fabrics will be British, too.

This season reminds us that very young human beings are much the same the world over, and Christmas belongs to them because only they can enjoy it wholeheartedly. Later, it becomes "a good deed in a naughty world"

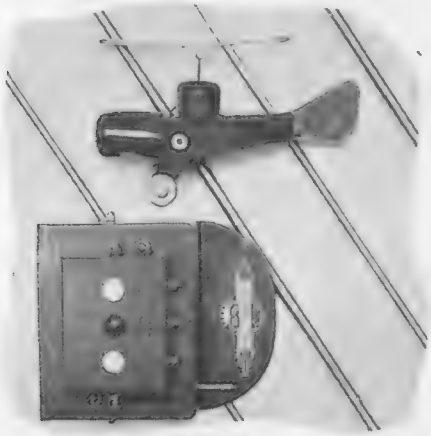
# Starred Choice

***Margaret Sharp picks the children's first favourites at this year's toy bazaars***

Two winners for the toddlers. The donkey above is big enough for a two-year-old to sit on and actually moves his little legs at a trot when pushed along. 87s. 6d. from Harrods, S.W.1. The musical pussy cat below rolls over and over on the floor, playing a tinkling version of "Rockabye Baby." 56s. 9d. from Whiteley, Ltd., Queensway, W.2.

For the little girl with domestic propensities, a Betty Crocker Baking Set containing all the necessary equipment for baking, small scale mixing bowl, pastry cutters and the like. Better still, packages of cake and icing mixture—just add water and mix!—which can really be eaten—with a recipe book. Price 75s. from Harrods, Knightsbridge, S.W.1

Here is something after any boy's heart, particularly those of the difficult eight to nine years age group. It is the world's first electric remote control toy helicopter. The helicopter will dip and dive, take off and fly in response to the press-button control and adjustment of the joystick. A battery provides the electric current. Hamley, £3 15s. 0d.



Four stocking fillers, on the right. Rub-a-dub-dub, a bathtime toy, 14s. 6d. The boat will sink but not the three men. For the older boy, a camphor propelled sailing boat, 7s. 11d. Both from Harrods, postage extra. For a little girl, a clockwork fairy, 5s. 11d.; for her brother, a miniature scale reproduction of daddy's car if it is one of the popular makes, 4s. 6d. Both at Hamley's, postage extra

*Fifth in our series of the great novels of the past is one of Charles Dickens's most profound works*

BLEAK HOUSE is an indictment of the English legal system in the mid-nineteenth century seen through the eyes of one of the greatest campaigners against social injustice.

It is, too, a violent attack on the stupidities of misguided philanthropy, in remote foreign causes, epitomized by Mrs. Jellyby and her ragged, neglected family.

It is a denunciation of aristocracy.

And it is also a complex mystery story.

*Bleak House* has been described as the most mature of Dickens's novels. Certainly it is as packed as any with those grotesque, satiric caricatures of the Victorian world. But the outlines are softened and humanized to a greater extent perhaps than in any of the other novels. And though the mirror the novelist holds up still reflects scenes of "man's inhumanity to man" that harrow the reader's emotions, still the observation is kinder, the character studies deeper.

For, as G. K. Chesterton has pointed out, Dickens "meant us to read this story in terms of his protest and his insurrection against the emptiness and arrogance of law, against the folly and pride of judges. Everything else that there is in this story entered into it through the unconscious or accidental energy of his genius."

Dickens starts the story in the fog of the London streets: "Fog everywhere. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. . . . Most of the shops lighted two hours before their time—as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look . . . and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest, hard by Temple Bar," where "at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery."

IN this literal and metaphorical fog the other multifarious characters are glimpsed, slowly the portraits are built up—of Rick Carstone, a good man who degenerates through no fault of his own and whose story is the core and tragedy of the book; Caddy Jellyby who rises above dispiriting circumstances; the true-hearted John Jarndyce, the faithful Ada, stalwart George and the proud, pathetic Dedlocks, heirs to an ancient heritage, meeting sudden overwhelming disaster in their own gallant ways; and Esther, whose story gives the novel the complexities of its plot, and its fluentest narrative.

Yet, as Dickens intended, the fog never really lifts—though the pen portraits emerge, the reader struggles and suffers with the characters and is wrapped in the damp, clammy, impenetrable cloak that is at the heart of the novel, the terrible influence of the Court of Chancery that has ruined lives and may yet ruin all theirs.

# Bleak House

Illustrations

by

MIDDLEHURST

THE woman dressed in clothes befitting a superior servant stood facing the ragged urchin of the streets in the murk of a London night a century ago. For the sovereign she offered him—with a hand that even he noted was white and sparkling with rings—he guided her through noisome alleys to a ghastly paupers' graveyard.

There he pointed out a fresh grave—"among them piles of bones. They was obliged to stamp upon it to git it in . . ."

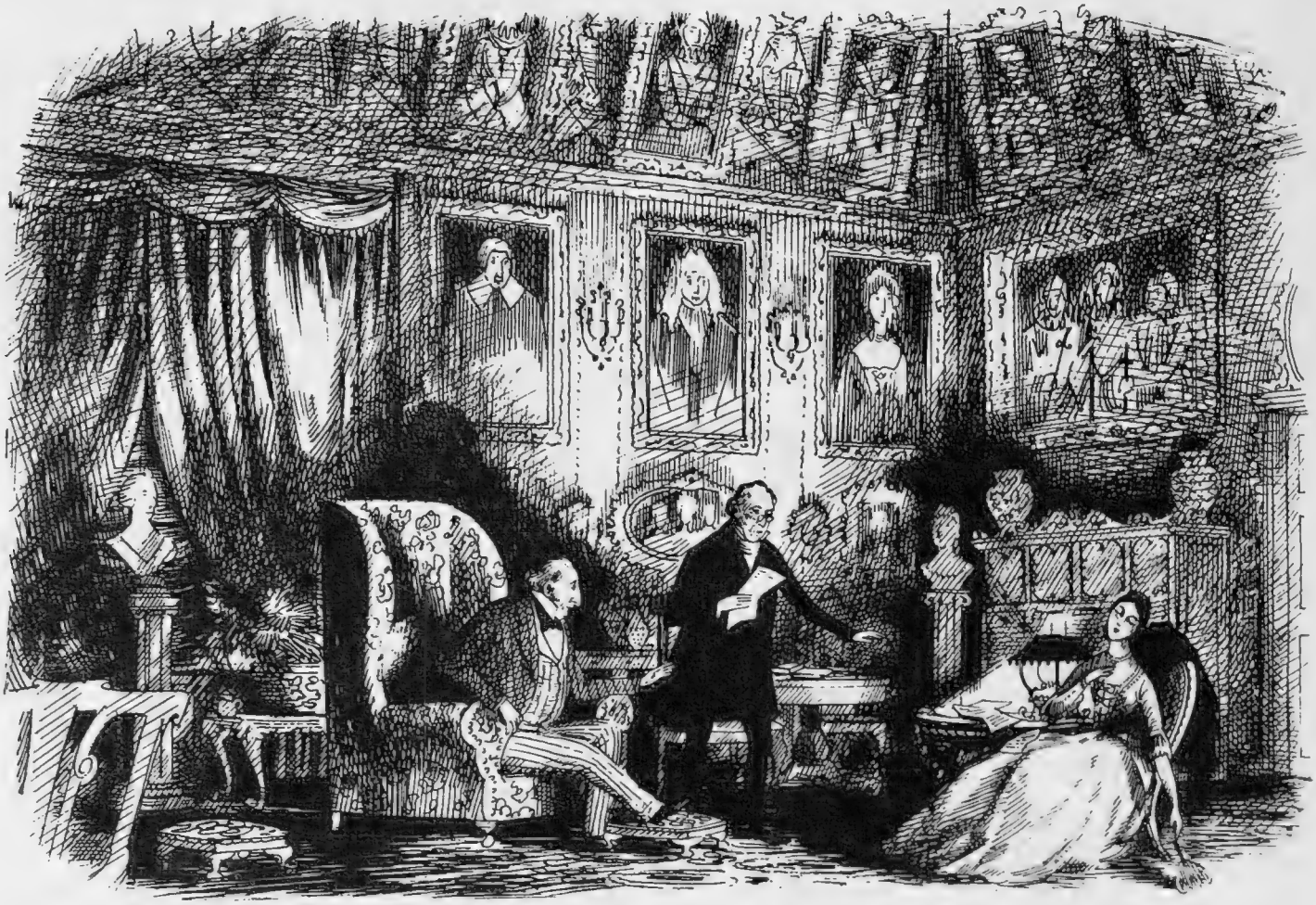
Then the veiled lady was gone and Jo, reflecting on the luck that had brought him a sovereign because he had happened to give evidence at an inquest on a law-writer who had died of starvation in a lonely garret—Jo vanished, too, about his business.

But others were interested in the veiled woman and soon Jo, apprehensive and dazed, was to be hauled wide-eyed to the presence of Mr. Tulkinghorn, solicitor to Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock. . . . And the tongue of rumour licked wildly round Lincoln's Inn Fields and the courts and alleys where the law-writer had died, in Chancery Lane.

In Chancery Lane . . . under the shadow of the Law Courts and particularly the Court of Chancery. In that same Chancery Court, the long suit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce dragged out its days, year after year, since the time when a "certain Jarndyce in an evil hour made a great fortune, and made a great Will. In the question how the trusts under that will are to be administered, the fortune left by the will" was being squandered away.

John Jarndyce was one of the remaining suitors in the case, and to his house in Hertfordshire—Bleak House—came as

Ada tells Esther that she and Rick have been secretly married



Lady Dedlock faints on recognising the law-writer's hand

" He pointed out a fresh grave "

wards, Ada Clare and Rick Carstone, and to join them, Esther Summerson, an orphan.

Esther, coming from school after the death of her guardian, first met Mr. Guppy, articled clerk of John Jarndyce's solicitor " Conversation " Kenge, and the Jellyby's, with whom she stayed a night before journeying on to Bleak House. Caddy Jellyby, eldest of a brood of ragged children neglected by Mrs. Jellyby in an unending preoccupation with great and distant philanthropic causes, was to become a close friend of Esther's. Mr. Guppy, susceptible man, fell in love with Esther at sight.

Esther settled down happily at Bleak House as housekeeper and friend to her new guardian, John Jarndyce, and quickly became devoted to the two young wards in Chancery, Ada and Rick. The latter was carefree and happy at first, but slowly became more and more aware of the part the Chancery suit played in his life.

At Bleak House, too, Esther made many fresh acquaintances, pleasant and the reverse, and after a particularly unpleasant visit to a brickmaker's cottage in the company of Mrs. Pardiggle " an active member on many committees " Esther and Ada returned to the cottage on their own. There they saw tragedy when a half-starved baby died and Esther, pitying the mother in the hopeless squalor of her surroundings, laid her own handkerchief over the tiny body . . .

BUT before all this happened, the web of circumstances that was later to embrace them all had spun itself out to distant Lincolnshire, to Chesney Wold, country home of the Dedlock family—and back again to that same ancient family's town house. There on a wet winter's afternoon, Mr. Tulkinghorn of Lincoln's Inn Fields came to see Sir Leicester and his Lady, for Lady Dedlock was also a suitor in Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Reading from some paper, he was suddenly asked by Lady Dedlock who had copied it. And when he told her it was a law-writer's work, though probably the man had not started life as a law-writer, she suddenly fainted.

Meanwhile in business in Lincolnshire, Mr. Guppy, seizing the opportunity to visit the famous old home of the Dedlocks, Chesney Wold, was surprised on seeing a

portrait of Lady Dedlock to find that he recognised the face though he knew he had never seen her. . . .

From Bleak House, Esther and Rick and Ada travelled to Lincolnshire on a visit to their guardian's great friend, Laurence Boythorn. One and all they fell in love with him, and Esther, womanly instinct stirring, one day asked her guardian whether Boythorn had ever married.

" He was all but married, once, long ago."

" Did the lady die ? "

" No—but she died to him."

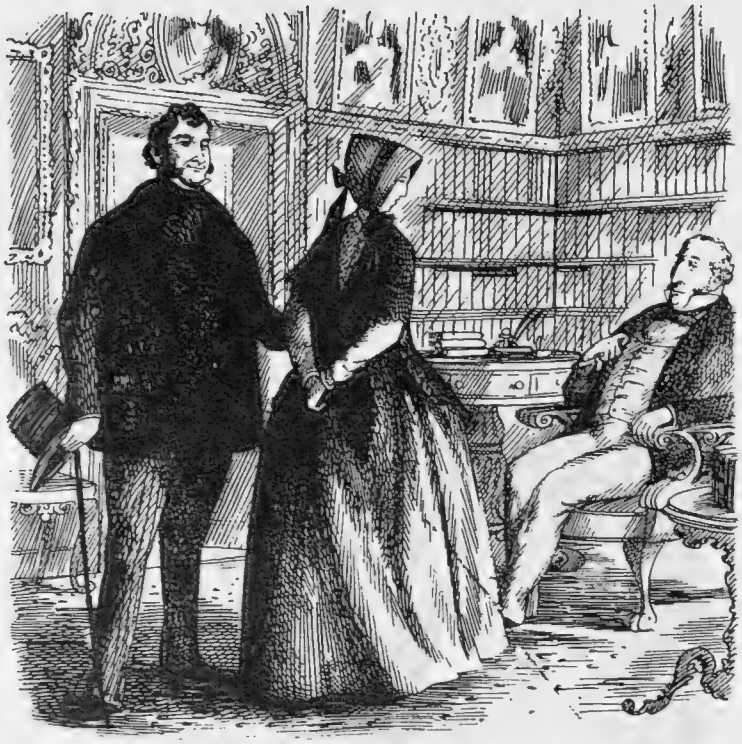
And Esther thought a little about this old love-story in the night, and finally falling asleep, dreamed of the days when she lived in her godmother's home—in the morning Mr. Guppy appeared at the house and after some preliminary skirmishings laid his heart and his hand at the scandalized but slightly amused Esther's feet, and hinted to her that he had information that could help her fortune.

Esther, finally getting rid of the young man, could dismiss the incident from her mind : the meaning behind his words was to be brought home to her bitterly before many months were past . . .

WHILE Esther was repulsing the importunate Mr. Guppy, Mr. Tulkinghorn was visiting a law stationers just off Chancery Lane . . . and in a mean room not a hundred yards distant a man lay dying. Mr. Tulkinghorn, rusty repository of half Society's secrets, was curious as to the identity of the law-writer whose hand-writing had shocked a startled recognition from Lady Dedlock a short while before. And from Snagsby's law stationers, the information now his, the solicitor made his way under the flickering gas jets to a rag and bottle shop kept by one Krook. There, in a filthy room on the second floor, he found the body of a man, dead of an overdose of opium. He was known as Nemo, but though his meagre effects were searched in the presence of the young surgeon, Allan Woodcourt—called in to certify as to the manner of death—no trace of his identity or background could be found. Yet, before his body had been deposited in the near-by paupers' graveyard, Mr. Tulkinghorn had written to Lady Dedlock that " he had something to tell her in reference to the person who copied the affidavit in Chancery, which so powerfully stimulated her curiosity."

" She could not bear others to see her face "

" Suddenly Lady Dedlock was on her knees crying ' O my child, my child ' "



Bucket makes his arrest, in Sir Leicester's presence

Meanwhile Rick was starting his career—the first of several he was to attempt—and after due consideration was, in the custom of the day, "apprenticed" to the medical profession. The day before he left, Ada confessed to Esther that she and Richard were in love, and John Jarndyce expressed his first misgivings about Rick's character to Esther.

And on that same momentous day Esther first made the acquaintance of a young surgeon named Allan Woodcourt—the same man who had examined the dying law-writer in the room over Krook's marine store in Chancery Lane . . .

Esther was not surprised soon to learn that Rick's mentor felt "he had not chosen his profession advisedly." As for Rick himself, his only reply to questions was that he was getting on "well enough." In fact, to Rick his career had become only a way of filling in time until the suit was ended—that suit which had already seen better men die in despair of its ever ending. So, his medical career abruptly ended, but taken to task by Esther, Rick promised to do better. For his second try he chose the Law.

Esther was distressed because she could see Richard's preoccupation with the suit growing on him and anxious for her beloved Ada's sake. But now she found fresh grounds for perplexity when her guardian told her what he knew of her own past. For Esther had been brought up by a woman she called "godmother," a woman who had told her in childhood: "Your mother, Esther, is your disgrace, and you were hers. . . ." To this John Jarndyce could add little save that before her death the woman had asked him to care for Esther "bred in secrecy from her birth" and telling him she was Esther's aunt by ties of blood if not legality. That John Jarndyce was now falling in love with his ward and chose this moment to enlighten her was palpable—but not to Esther, "not for many and many a day." For Allan Woodcourt was a frequent visitor, until his departure on a trip abroad as a ship's surgeon.

Esther, too, great-hearted friend to all, had much to occupy her time with the duties of housekeeping at the rambling old Bleak House and visits here and there, particularly to her friend Caddy Jellyby. Caddy's

"A desolate figure, lost in the wintry night"

mother spent her life with a missionary zeal devoted to the cause of the "heathen" and neglected her large family. But Caddy, eldest, and until Esther's friendship with her began, unpaid secretary to her mother, had fallen in love with a dancing master, Prince Turveydrop. Prince slaved all hours to support his hypocrite of a father, who managed to live a life of complete idleness at the expense of his hard-working son. But Caddy was in love with the boy and though Esther saw what Caddy's lot was likely to be she did what she could to encourage and help her.

Esther finds Allan waiting at Bleak House

NOW Jo's meeting with the veiled lady was to come to light. For the tattered urchin, rousing the suspicions of a policeman when he tried to change the sovereign and claiming that the law stationer Snagsby knew him as an honest boy, was brought along to Snagsby's shop, where, in the presence of Guppy, the Rev. Mr. Chadband—"a large, yellow man, with a fat smile"—Mrs. Chadband and Mrs. Snagsby, Jo recounted the story of the woman who gave him the sovereign to see the burying ground. (*Continued on page* 84)

# Backcloth to Gaiety

*Paper chains . . . Christmas-tree baubles the holly and the mistletoe . . . they play their part as a backcloth to the Christmas scene, but new variations on old themes give tradition a fresh lease of life*

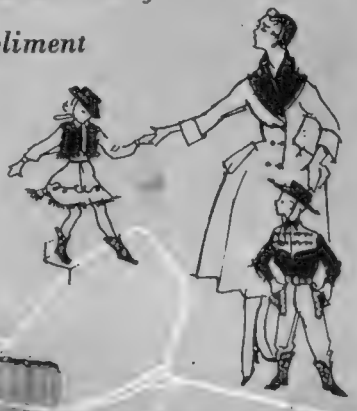
GAY but not gaudy . . . colourful but not garish . . . that should be the theme of the Christmas decorations, which, after all, have to be lived with from Christmas Eve to Twelfth Night.

Here are some ideas . . . a scarlet banner, in paper perhaps, spangled with stars cut from silvered paper and finished with a gold tassel . . . a hanging cane flower basket stuck with folly sticks (obtainable from Marshall and Snelgrove at 3s. 2d. each to serve as trophies for the children's party later) . . . a gilded picture frame blocked in with holly leaves and interlaced with fairy lights . . . a hanging centre-piece made from a large potato stuck thickly with holly sprays . . . a Christmas mobile assembled from twine, slender bamboo rods and coloured glass baubles . . . the best of the Christmas cards mounted on a plain parchment lamp-shade.

Best of the decorations to buy, against those to make, are the revolving musical Christmas tree which plays a charming selection of carols, £3 6s. 6d., and the rocket ship table centre-piece, with mountains of the moon and crackers, £2 15s. 6d., both from Marshall and Snelgrove. The holly-wreathed candle ring to hang from the ceiling and a selection of Christmas mobiles can be obtained from Heals.

# COMPLIMENTS *of the* SEASON

*Take the conventional form of greeting literally as a guide to choosing Christmas gifts for your friends and give them presents which carry with them a subtle compliment to their individuality*



CAREER GIRL FRIEND . . . difficult to choose for unless you remember she sometimes gets tired of dashing around town . . . so give her self-pampering bath luxuries . . . Blossoms and Dew bath cubes . . . Gay Chiffon skin perfume in a frivolous snowball . . . Electrique Cologne and talc in a "magic wand." She will have decided tastes in perfumes, so give her either the one she *always* wears . . . is it Chanel No. 5? . . . or a new one she can't possibly have tried yet . . . Noa, Noa . . . Fath de Fath . . . For a lavish gift, a fitted beauty case . . . for the little present, a L'Origan perfume sachet, a make-up mirror.

MOTHER OF TWINS . . . busy to harassed . . . secretly hankering to be in the *femme fatale* class. Insinuate that *of course* she spends hours on her appearance with a Personalised Beauty Treatment Set . . . delight her with a beauty treatment voucher and offer to sit-in while she is in town. Be practical with Creme Puff, the two-second make-up . . . with matching lipstick. Bring Hubby into the picture with a "Him and Her" coffret, after-shave lotion for him, cologne for her . . . pile on the exotics with a rare Patou perfume, a lavish wicker basket of 4711 luxuries. Pamper her, even with the little gift of a tiny phial of perfume accompanying a corsage to wear on Christmas Eve.

TEENAGER . . . with secret ambitions to be chic and sophisticated. Give her Steiner's Starmist to put a white streak in her hair for parties . . . the gayest new nail varnish and matching lipstick . . . a gift voucher for a magnificent new hair style at one of the leading West End hairdressers. Gratify her longings for the best of everything with a Young Beauty Gift Set . . . give her a lipstick wardrobe and the excitement of finding out which colour group is really "hers." This is the age that dotes on novelties . . . she will love the Potter and Moore lavender water in a miniature gondola or the bracelet compact . . . for a little gift, why not a make-up tray in pastel blue or pink?

For further details of the gifts suggested, please turn to p. 74.

Photographs by Colin Sherborne

# What's the Latest...

TOPICAL news first . . . Raymond, the famous hair stylist, plans a Christmas present for you this year. Every woman making an appointment for hair style or treatment during the Christmas week at either the Albemarle Street, Grafton Street or Knightsbridge salon will receive a miniature presentation set of Raymond's beauty preparations. . . . Make a note of it.

Worry or eyestrain? Whatever your private excuse, forehead lines and creases are too unbecomingly ageing to be ignored. Try smoothing them away with Maria Hornes' Serena Brow. You are recommended to apply these delicate wing-shaped pads to your brow while you lie relaxed . . . when pressed for time they seem to work just as magically if you run through a few nylons the while . . .

On the subject of relaxing, is there anything more soothing than a warm, scented bath? Yardley have now added a bath oil to their lavender bath luxuries.

SCHOOLGIRL . . . remember the secret longing of the twelve-year-old to be grown up . . . give her something to make *her* think *you* think she is old enough for beautifying, with Mama's approval, of course. Flatter her with a big drum of April Violets dusting powder or a dusting powder Puff-Puff . . . fragrant Lilac Blossom complexion soap. Thrill her with bubbling bath oil or bath salts. If you have ideas about grooming, make it a Mason Pearson hairbrush . . . a manicure set is a tactful hint which will be rapturously received if a nail varnish is included . . . colourless, of course. For the little present, adorable Mr. Wu, in soap

THE OLDER WOMAN . . . who does not want the lavender-and-old-lace kind of gift. Please and flatter her still-young heart with Mink perfume and its luxury trappings of a real mink tail . . . or an elegant powder compact. Never mind if she protests she is too old for this kind of thing . . . she doesn't think so *really*. Give her a jewelled lipstick . . . flatter her taste and discrimination with a luxury hand cream . . . delight her with a beauty treatment voucher or a rejuvenating preparation she might not venture for herself. Even the little gift should make her feel young and special, so why not a frivolous pearly-pink nail varnish!

Who launched the *femme chatte*? Was it Jacques Fath at his last collection? Anyway, if you want to try out this lynx-eyed sophistication, follow Elizabeth Arden's recipe worked out for the Fath show . . . pale skin tones, pale powder, eyes shadowed with violet and up-tilted at the corners, lashes tipped with green, lips vivid with Parma Violet lipstick.

Have you been wanting to try out Gayelord Hauser's theories of dieting to be young and beautiful, but frustrated in your efforts to get wheat germ, molasses, and the like? A Gayelord Hauser Centre has opened in London to market his special foods which will be available at chemists. Or you can write to Gayelord Hauser Centre, 5, Avery Row, W.1.

Have you noticed how many women are wearing a fair streak in their hair and how becoming it can look? Painless way of obtaining a bi-coloured effect is to use Steiner's Starmist in the new Moonwhite shade . . . handbag size 5s. 3d.

ECONOMY NOTE: Countess hair-conditioning cream can now be obtained in a small three-application tube. Three applications are often sufficient for restoring the hair to a healthy sheen. Total outlay 1s. 6d.

# Two Against the Cold

MATERIALS required for this stole are 5½ ozs. Marshgrove 2-ply wool, one pair of No. 8 knitting needles and a coarse crochet hook. The stole measures approximately 70 ins. long and 23 ins. wide, and the tension should be about 6 stitches to the inch. The abbreviations used throughout the pattern are : k.=knit, p.=purl, m. 1=bring the wool forward to make a stitch, m.s.=moss stitch, rep.=repeat.

## THE STOLE

Cast on 121 sts. *very loosely* and work in m.s. for 3 rows.

**4th row.**—(Right side of work.) K. 1, p. 1, k. 2, * m. 1, k. 2 ; rep. from * to last 3 k. 1, p. 1, k. 1.

**5th row.**—(K. 1, p. 1) twice * p. 3, slip the first of the 3 sts. over the other two ; rep. from * to last 3, k. 1, p. 1, k. 1.

**6th row.**—K. 1, p. 1, k. 1, * k. 2, m. 1 ; rep. from * to last 4, k. 2, p. 1, k. 1.

**7th row.**—K. 1, p. 1, k. 1, * p. 3, slip the first of the 3 sts. over the other two ; rep. from * to last 4 (p. 1, k. 1) twice. Rep. the last 4 rows until work measures approx. 70 ins. long, then work a final 3 rows of m.s. and cast off *very loosely*. Complete with a fringe made thus :

Cut a piece of card 3 ins. by 3 ins. Wind wool 9 times round the card and cut through all thicknesses. Using a crochet hook, draw the folded loop through edge of stole and pass end through the loop. Work a fringe along each end of the stole in this manner.

A lightweight wool stole is the best knitting investment you can make against the chill discomforts of an English winter. If the stole is light and lacy—as this one is—it will give all-day service as a bed-wrap or muffler under a top coat, as a daytime wrap or an evening stole. Make it in white, or in one of the soft pastel off-shades from the Marshgrove 2-ply wool range, obtainable from Marshall and Snelgrove county shops. Fringe cards on request.

*Double starred choice for cold weather knitting . . . a lacy stole to wear over dresses or under coats . . . a striped three-piece set of jersey, cap and gloves*

**MATERIALS** required for this three-piece set are 5 oz. Sirdar Majestic 3-ply wool in Pink No. 681 and 4 oz. in white; one set of No. 11 and No. 13 needles and one pair of No. 11 needles. Working at a tension of 8 sts. and 10 rows to the in., using No. 11 needles, and 9 sts. and 11 rows to the in. using No. 13 needles; the instructions for the jersey are for a size 34-in. bust. The cap measures 20 ins., stretching to 22 ins. on the head; the gloves are average fitting.

**THE BACK**

Using white wool and two of the No. 13 needles, cast on 111 sts. and rib as follows :

**1st row.**—(P. 1, k. 1) to ending p. 1.

**2nd row.**—(K. 1, p. 1), to ending k. 1.

Rep. these 2 rows, working firmly, for 3 ins. in depth (= 36 rows).

Change to the larger needles and commence patt. as follows :

**1st row.**—Join pink and k.

**2nd row.**—P. in pink.

**3rd row.**—As 1st row.

**4th row.**—As 2nd row.

**5th row.**—Join white and k.

**6th row.**—P. in white (= one complete patt.).

Rep. these 6 rows, inc. at each end of the 7th, then every 8th row following until 135 sts. on needle. Complete 96 patt. rows.

**Shape Armholes.**—Cast off 5 sts. at the beg. of the next 2 rows, then 4 at the beg. of the next 2, then 3 at the beg. of the next 2, then 2 at the beg. of the next 2, then dec. at beg. of the next 2 (= 105 sts. remain).

Work 20 rows more.

**31st row.**—Leave centre opening, patt. 53, leaving 52 sts. on other needle and work 38 rows of opening.

**Shape Shoulders.**—Cast off 17 sts. at the beg. of the next 2 rows, each starting from armhole end, cast off the remaining 19 for neck loosely.

Work other shoulder to correspond, having 18 sts. only to cast off for the neck.

**FRONT**

Work exactly as for the back without opening, until 48 rows of armhole shaping completed.

**Shape for Neck.**—Patt. 44, turn and p. back to end.

Now k. 42, turn and p. back to end.

Rep. last 2 rows, working 2 sts. less each time, until 34 sts. remain.

Work 12 rows more on the 34 sts.

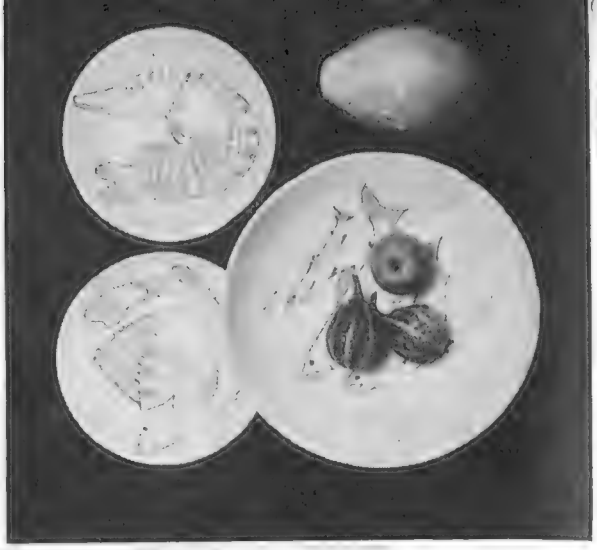
**Shape Shoulder.**—Cast off 17 sts. at the beg. of the next 2 rows, each starting from armhole end (in white), and fasten off.

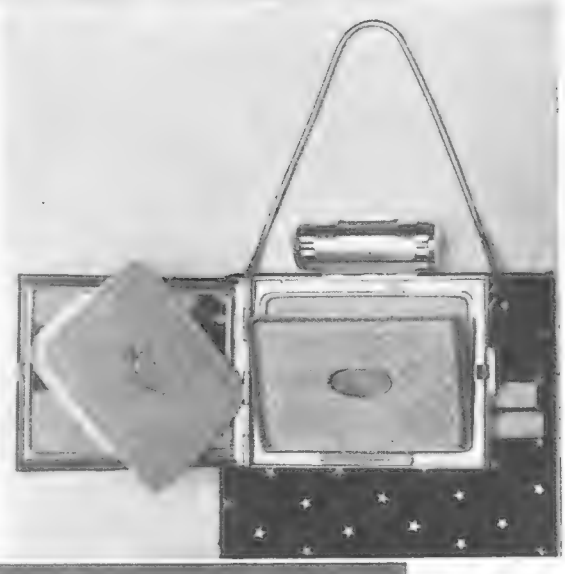
Now slip the 10 shaping sts. and 17 centre sts. on to pin for the neck, and joining wool to neck edge, k. 1st row to end.

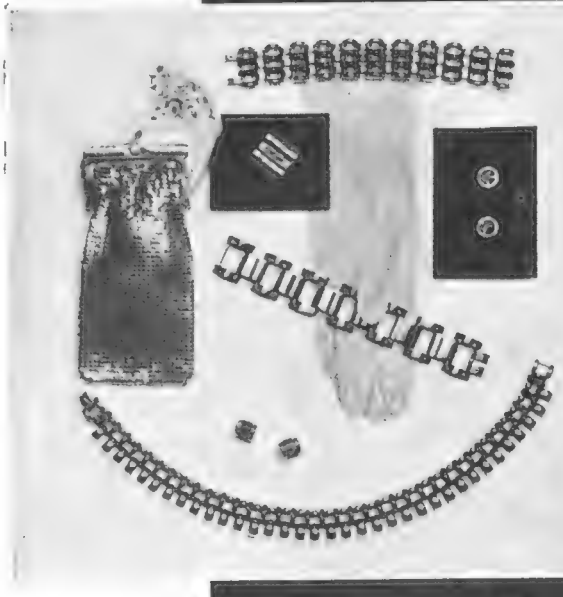
(*Continued on page* 88)

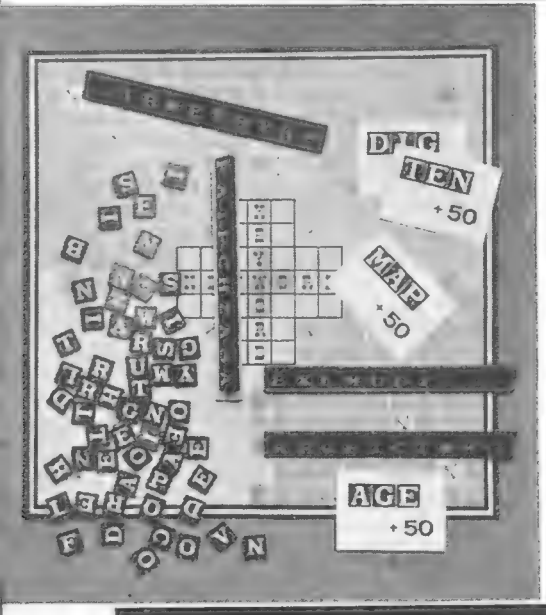
*Margaret Sharp . . .*

**Right:** Danish pottery fish set, in black outline on grey, plates, 9s. 6d., serving bowl 23s. 9d., John Lewis. **Below left:** Kigu party case combining powder compact, lipstick and cigarette case, Selfridges 56s. **Below right:** De Farre untarnishable jewellery, gilt brooch 25s. 9d., bracelet 30s., stud ear-rings 19s. 6d., gold and black necklace 42s. 4d., bracelet 53s. 4d., ear-rings 23s. 4d., Harrods. Gilt mesh spectacle case, Marshall and Snelgrove, 45s. 6d. Father Christmas candle (in title piece, left) 5s. 6d. a pair. Druces of Baker Street



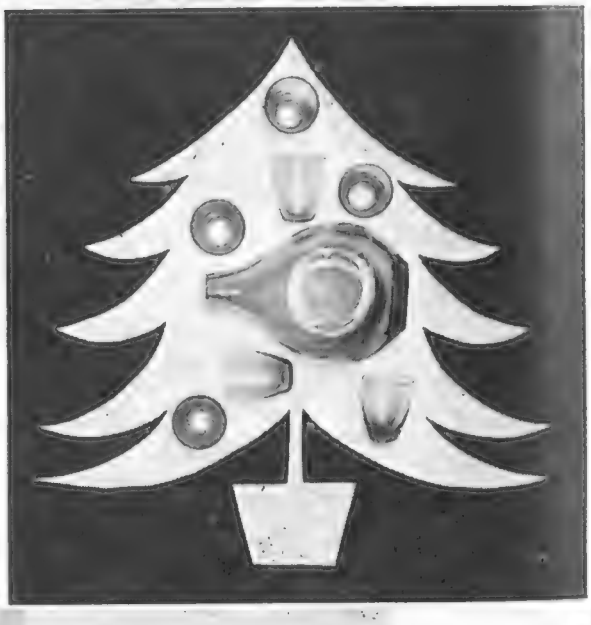


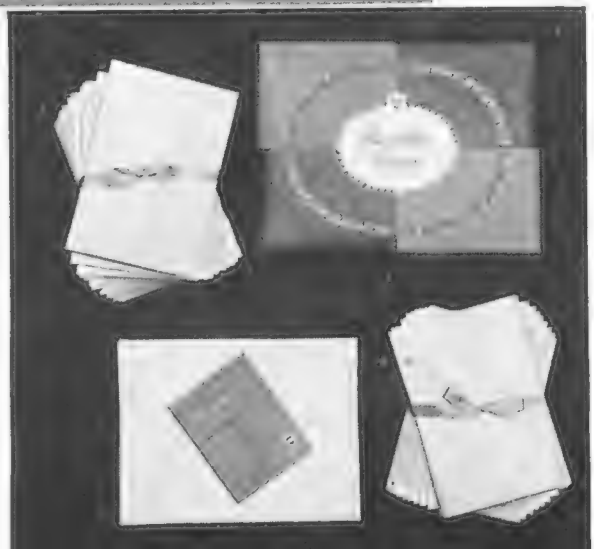


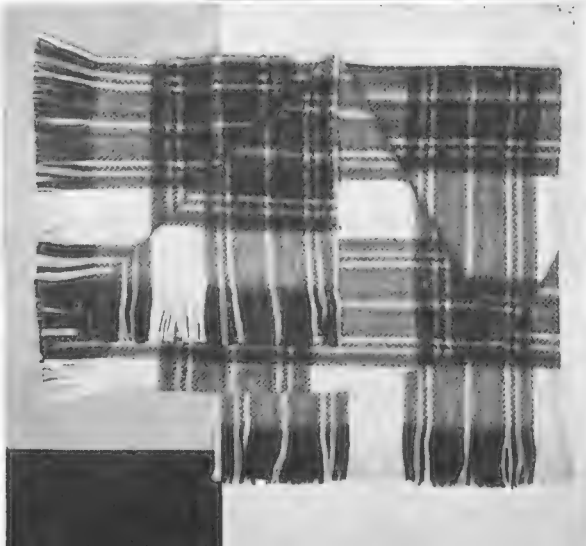



**Left:** John Waddington's game, "Keyword," for solo amusement or family party, 21s. from Hamleys, Regent Street. **Right:** Swedish glass liqueur set with a dimple grip flask and seven glasses, one for use as a flask cap, in grey or gold glass, Druces, 17s. 6d.

**Below left:** A present welcomed by anyone, Basildon Bond writing paper in blue, white or azure, 4s. 9d. per box of 32 folded sheets of paper and matching envelopes, Selfridges. **Below right:** A soft wool knee rug, made in most tartans and light enough to be used as a shawl. £2 15s. from The Scotch House, Brompton Road, S.W.1. *Except where otherwise stated, prices quoted for all the items on these two pages are exclusive of postage for mail orders*

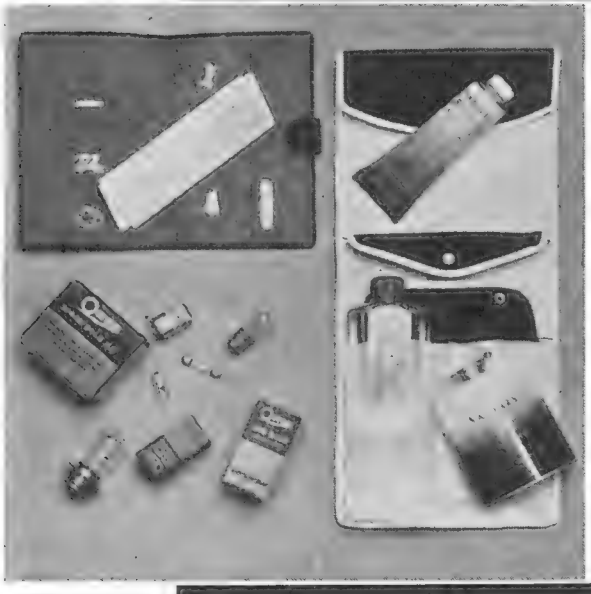






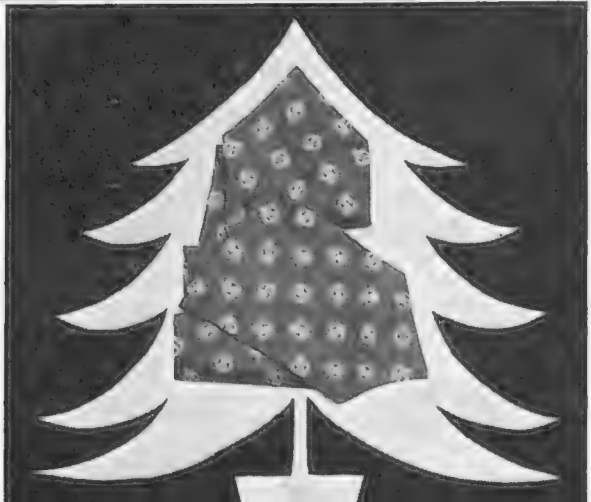
## *Christmas Shopping . . .*

**Left:** Wooden individual salad bowls 4s., carved wooden salad servers, 10s. 6d., Yugoslavia Crafts, 143 Regent Street, W.1. **Right:** Four-piece Eskimo nursery set, 25s. Heals. Copeland Spode nursery cereal plates 4s. 5d., mugs 5s., obtainable through Goode's, South Audley Street, W.1. **Below left:** Ashtrays with Emmet or Peynet designs 9s. 9d., Heals. Barling "Guinea Grain" pipe from 40s., Ronson Purafilt cigarette holder 17s. 6d., Harrods. Pottery frog cigarette holder £1 7s. 6d. Simpsons of Piccadilly. Ronson Wedgwood table lighter, 4 gns. Army and Navy Stores



**Above right:** Handpainted pottery dachshunds 7s. 6d. to 14s. 6d., Betty Hope, 19 Beauchamp Place, S.W.1. Iced water jug in Wiltshire pottery, 17s. 6d., Druces. **Left:** An Osram spare bulb set for the car owner, 14s. 9d., Harrods. "Viking" wallet for the traveller in black morocco leather lined with red, containing foreign currency calculator, 3 gns. post free, Richard Ogden, Burlington Arcade, W.1. Waterproof hold-all containing Yardley-for-men preparations, 34s. 3d., Selfridges. **Right:** Westclox ceramic alarm clock, 69s. 6d. post free from Bentalls of Kingston

**Below right:** Kayser-Bondor nylon nightdress, 89s. 11d., Dickins and Jones, Dorothy Gray's Wedgwood toilet water, 24s. 9d. **Below left:** A man's silk cravat to wear with open-neck shirts, 19s. 6d., Simpsons



COOKERY . . . . . by JANET DARBY

# *HELP YOURSELF!*

A buffet supper party solves the catering problem for the hostess and pleases her guests by its easy informality

Well stock the buffet table with food and drink and invite the guests to help themselves. Dishes to prepare in advance are described in the article, but shop-bought etceteras, sweet and savoury, should not be undervalued as aids to easing the party catering

A GREAT deal of hard thinking goes on at this time of the year, and most of it centres around Christmas. We all want to celebrate it appropriately, quite apart from the family feast of turkey and plum pudding; but when all's said and done no turkey, however large, is going to serve the kind of party you might want to give during the season.

A cocktail party is all very well in its way, but it does start and finish rather early, doesn't it? And to my mind a cocktail party, while quite adequate for acquaintances, even intimate acquaintances, isn't quite right for friends, to whom one does want to be hospitable and welcoming at this time of the year.

It seems to me that the answer is self-service, which, having moved successfully through cafés and restaurants to grocery stores, will prove equally time and labour saving in the home. The self-service meal can cater for anything up to twenty people, and is informal enough to create the spirit of appreciative friendship and bonhomie in your guests. I'm not saying, mind you, that an appropriate assortment of drinks won't help the bonhomie, too. Especially if said drinks are presided over by a handsome bowl of Christmas punch.

I suggest that your trestle table, covered with a snowy and ample cloth, is set against the wall between two smaller tables holding the drinks; punch, with ladle and glasses on the one, and wines, spirits and soft drinks on the other.

On the assumption that you won't want the traditional boar's head to centre your buffet table, I recommend a handsome roast of cold beef, invisibly sliced and put together with aspic. Flank this lordly dish with tomatoes stuffed with celery and apple salad, and invite your friends to set about it. I can assure you that they won't need to be urged on.

And if you feel that there should be at least one hot dish, why not a turkey cream to be served with cranberry sauce. It looks as nice as it tastes, and makes good use of those remaining scraps of turkey which would otherwise be no longer presentable. A dish of little Christmas patties, some sausage rolls, cheese straws and other savoury bitlets dotted about help the picture.

If you want to be traditional you will use short crust pastry for mince pies, but you will find rough puff pastry best for sausage rolls, flaky pastry best for the savoury patties. For flaky pastry, use 8 ozs. plain flour, ¼ level teaspoon salt, 5 ozs. vegetable-fat shortening and 6 tablespoons cold water. For a special flavour, add 2 teaspoons lemon juice to the cold water for mixing. For the short crust, use 8 ozs. plain flour, pinch of salt, 3½ ozs. vegetable-fat shortening and 2 tablespoons cold water. For rough puff pastry, 8 ozs. plain flour, ¼ level teaspoon salt, 4 ozs. vegetable-fat shortening and 8 tablespoons cold water.

YOU may like to make in advance a cherry Christmas cake, which is so popular a part of Scottish Christmas celebrations. Dates stuffed with marzipan, peppermint creams, and perhaps a dish of Italian Christmas nougat (torrone). Now put your tray of cutlery at one end of the table, your pile of plates at the other, and you are all set to enjoy your own party. Since most of the food is cold there will be no anxious sprints (*Continued on page* 86)

# Peach Flan—with Pastry!

### SHORT PASTRY

6 ozs. (6 heaped tablespoons) flour
3 ozs. Stork Margarine · 3 dessertspoons water
Pinch of salt

### FILLING

1 heaped tablespoon apricot jam · ¾ pint thick sweetened custard
1 large tin sliced peaches (drained) · ½ pint juice from tin
1 well-rounded teaspoon arrowroot · Sugar to taste

Rub in Stork to sieved flour and salt, mix with water. Roll out, and line 8-inch flan ring. Fill centre with layer of crusts or beans placed on round of greaseproof. Bake 10 minutes in fairly hot oven (Regulo 6; 400°F) on second shelf from top. Remove paper and beans, and bake for 20 minutes longer. Remove, cool, spread jam in bottom, add custard, and arrange peaches on top when firm. Blend the arrowroot with half of the juice, boil remainder with sugar, stir into arrowroot, return to pan, boil 3 minutes, stirring. Cool a little, and pour evenly over fruit. Allow to set.

Cut out these recipes and keep them—there'll be lots more to follow.

# Strawberry Flan—with Sponge!

Whether your favourite is fruit pillowed on light, luscious sponge, or fruit nestling in crisp, short flan casing, Stork Margarine will make the most perfect flan you ever tasted. It creams so quickly, so smoothly for cakes—it works in easily to make the most mouth-watering pastry! Follow these recipes the next time you want to serve a really lovely special treat!

### FLAN CASE

3 ozs. (3 heaped tablespoons) self-raising flour
1 level teaspoon baking powder · Pinch of salt
1½ ozs. Stork Margarine · 1 egg · 3 ozs. (3 rounded tablespoons) castor sugar · 1 dessertspoon warm water

### FILLING

1 lb. fresh, frozen or drained tinned strawberries
Sugar to taste · 1 well-rounded teaspoon arrowroot
¼ pint strawberry or fruit juice (or water, sweetened, flavoured, and coloured pink)

Cream the Stork with half the sugar; add and cream in remaining sugar. Beat in egg, and fold in water, with previously sieved flour, baking powder and salt. Bake in greased, floured 8-inch sponge flan tin for 30 minutes in middle of moderate oven (Regulo 4: 360°F). Remove carefully, cool upside down, arrange drained (or fresh) strawberries in hollow. Blend arrowroot with half juice (or water, sweetened), boil remainder, stir into arrowroot, return to pan, boil 3 minutes, stirring. Cool, pour evenly over fruit, and leave to set.

**Stork Margarine**
**Cookery Service**
9 GREAT SUFFOLK STREET, LONDON, S.E.1

VAN DEN BERGHS & JURGENS LIMITED, LONDON, E.C.4

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# The Little Weakness Of Madame Thibaud (*Continued from page 12*)

It was cooler than a well in the stone passage where, at Thibaud's request, they waited "a little minute," while their host wrestled with the shutters of an adjoining room. As the shutters broke open, liberating a horde of flies that were sunning themselves on the closed window, the light revealed what Voussard guessed to be the sanctum of the late Madame Thibaud: rich with green plush and ball fringe, with knitted mats and embroidered antimacassars.

His eye went instinctively to the framed "enlargement" over the sideboard: unmistakably the bridal pair. Monsieur Thibaud, fiercely moustachioed, blackberry-eyed, wearing his medal of the first World War and holding a straw boater surrounded by a diagonally-striped ribbon, supported on his arm so exactly the delicate girl of Voussard's imagination that the latter drew a sharp breath.

Although the photograph must have been taken somewhere about 1933, she had a strangely Victorian air, a modest droop of the head that belonged to the chignon and bustle. To say she was pretty (at least in the photograph) would be to exaggerate, but there was a softness, a refinement enhanced, no doubt, by the burly figure of her husband.

"It may seem strange to you, monsieur," said Thibaud, when they were seated, with a carafe of wine between them, "that I should take a person I have never met before into my confidence. Monsieur de Bellefeuilles is an old customer; if he will honour me by allowing me to call him so, an old friend. In fact, we were comrades of the first war; is that not so, mon capitaine?" he added proudly. "Like everyone here, he remembers my dear wife . . . we sometimes talk together . . ." Thibaud gulped back his emotion. "But sometimes it is a pleasure to talk to a stranger: one like yourself, monsieur, whom one recognizes at sight as a person of sensibility. Monsieur le baron has seen what I am about to show you, but he will not object to seeing it again."

LOOKING up quickly, Voussard caught, with surprise, the look on the other's face. Leaning forward, grinning through the stumps of his bared teeth, Monsieur de Bellefeuilles reminded him of an old terrier watching at the mouth of a rabbit-hole after the ferret is sent down. Catching Voussard's eye, however, he scowled, shut his mouth and jerked himself back in the chair.

"First let me explain to you, monsieur"—Thibaud's hands, like big, hairy shells, were curved tenderly over the little boxes—"that before we were married, my wife was an assistant in a jeweller's shop in Toulon. She was very young—*entendu?*—and her duties lay mainly in dusting, in polishing the showcases and in running errands. But if one is observant and has the heart in the business, one may learn a lot—*quoi?*"

Voussard agreed; his curiosity was roused by the boxes which were of various shapes and sizes, and looked as though they might formerly have held chocolates.

"Now I will tell you a little story, which monsieur le baron knows already," continued Thibaud, with his simple and endearing smile.

"It was after the war, when the maquisards came home and we had our celebration, here in Artémise. Madame la baronne graciously condescended to patronize the reception. All Artémise was there to hear the orations. When they were over and everyone was applauding the speakers, I saw my wife had tears in her eyes. 'What is it, my little?' I asked her. '*Ah, Dieu,*' she sighed, 'did you not see the *collier* madame la baronne was wearing?'—Figure to yourself, monsieur! *Ma petite dame* had not heard one word of the eloquence; her mind was fixed only upon the *collier* of madame la baronne!"—Monsieur Thibaud leaned over and clapped the baron on the knee. "*Tu te rencontes, coco?*" he guffawed, forgetting in his amusement that, although they were old comrades, he was addressing a member of the aristocracy. Voussard saw the baron draw back and his face freeze.

"You remember how she blushed, and how we laughed, when I told you about it next day?"—Thibaud was overcome by the simple joke. "From then on, I heard of nothing else! There was no need to ask what she wanted for Christmas, or for her anniversary. Messieurs," said Thibaud, sobering, "such a woman should have had the Crown jewels, Cleopatra's pearls, the treasures of the pyramids! She should have been the wife of a Rockefeller, of an Indian maharajah. I was only a poor shopkeeper, and I did my best."

VOUSSARD, one of the greatest authorities of his day on jewellery—particularly the antique—repressed a shudder as he looked at the collection Thibaud emptied on the plush cloth. As, one after another, the boxes disgorged their horrid contents, he wondered from what baseness of human invention such objects could emanate, to what type of mind they could appeal. Alas, for the beauty that enshrined a soul that responded to such trash as this. Alas, for the lessons learned in a jeweller's shop in Toulon.

"And for each she thanked me"—Thibaud's voice was thick with emotion—"as though I had given her the Koh-i-Noor! In each she saw the symbol of what I would have given her, if I had been a rich man."

Voussard's sympathy quickened again.

"And she wore them, to please you," he suggested.

"Not out of doors." He shook his head wistfully. "But when we were alone, she would dress up in them all, for my pleasure. 'Now I am Cendrillon, going to the ball.' she would say. 'Now I am la Reine Marie Antoinette, receiving her ladies.'—For, of course, with her taste, she could not wear such things in public, even in Artémise."

"Show him what she wore!" growled the baron. Again Voussard looked at him in surprise; grinning and champing his jaws, he appeared to be possessed by an exaggerated impatience.

"All in good time, mon capitaine," Thibaud assured him. "One market day, monsieur, when we were looking in the shops, she saw a necklace that she envied so much that I resolved to get it for her. Making an excuse, I slipped back and inquired the price. A thousand holy thunders!—all that for a string of beads, not much thicker than a thread of wool? However, my friend Coppeau the jeweller agreed to let me pay for it by instalments. And when I clasped it round her neck that evening—messieurs, I would have stolen it, for the sake of that sparkle in her eyes!"

Voussard nodded sympathetically; the little string of diamanté was certainly less objectionable than the rest.

"Very pretty. She wore that, no doubt."

Thibaud's eyes filled with tears of pride.

"She wore it with her Sunday dress—Monsieur le baron is feeling the heat?" he observed kindly to Monsieur de Bellefeuilles, who was breathing heavily.

"Get on, Thibaud, get on. I want my lunch," he muttered.

"Well, then there was the brooch. I would be ashamed to tell you—you would say I had gone mad! In confidence," whispered Thibaud, "a thousand six hundred francs! Again, of course, Coppeau made allowances. She would have been scandalized, knowing the profit that is made on such things. But we had no family and I had some little economies—I did not see why she should not be pleased, and I have the delight of her pleasure."

THE brooch, for a thing of its kind, was not bad; Voussard had seen similar trinkets on the lapels of Parisiennes, and although, as a dealer in gems and a man of taste, he deplored the vogue for "dress jewellery," he supposed it was all right for those who could not afford the real thing.

"And now," continued Thibaud, "I will show you something unique." He gingerly picked up an ear-ring, while his thick forefinger probed the litter for its companion. "You would hardly believe, would you, that that was false? She found it herself, on a stall in the market; what it is, to have an eye for such things!"

"But—" began Voussard, and bit back a yelp as a savage pressure descended on his left foot.

"Monsieur suffers?" asked Thibaud, with solicitude.

"A bunion," muttered Voussard, wondering if he had temporarily mislaid his powers of judgment.

"It is no doubt the heat—ah, here is the other. I am sorry for my friend Coppeau if this continues, for it is certainly genius! Do me the favour to regard it closely."

Minute rainbow-coloured rays flashed into Voussard's dazzled eyes.

"My wife who, having been in the business, knew all about such things, explained it to me. Would you believe it is two bits of cut glass, with a bit of tinfoil in between? It is inconceivable, like conjuring. The materials—bah. But considering the skill: such skill as that, to be sold on a piece of cardboard for a hundred and twenty-five francs! Here is the card, with the price marked in purple figures; I made her keep it, to show that such things could really be."

Voussard was silent. As a dealer, he had handled many more valuable stones; these he priced mentally at about two hundred and fifty thousand francs. On the edge of the table, the knuckles of Monsieur de Bellefeuilles' hand whitened the straining flesh. Voussard quietly moved his left foot out of harm's way.

"Women are incalculable, monsieur," Thibaud was saying softly. "These were her favourites; she wore them by day and night. I would have left them in her ears, but for the wish she expressed to me when she was dying—who's that?" he shouted, jumping up and going to the door. "Excuse me for a moment, messieurs; one must not neglect the customers."

"OFFER him a thousand francs!" The baron's face was a reddish grey, the bristle, softened by sweat, glistened; his little, red-rimmed eyes plunged at Voussard's across the table. "We can settle up afterwards."

Voussard looked down his nose. To a representative of the house of Chambon, the suggestion was an insult.

"I'll give you—half what I paid for it!" stuttered the baron.

"In 1938?"—Voussard saw he had made a shrewd guess. "You are joking my friend. Values have more than doubled since then." He was wondering how far the baron would go. It would mean a nice bit of profit on the side.

"What do you want?" persisted the baron.

Voussard shrugged his shoulders and gave a slight smile.

"It is pleasant, to receive confirmation of the charms of Madame Thibaud." For the second time, he watched his arrow hit the mark. "Might one inquire," he said delicately, "whether madame la baronne has missed her ear-rings?"

"Don't be a fool: they don't belong to my wife. But I want them back!"

"Why don't you make your own offer?"

"How can a man in my position—?" exploded the baron.

"Allow me to remind you, monsieur, that a man in my position, representative of a famous firm, cannot be mixed up in fraudulent undertakings," said Voussard loftily. What he really meant was that the proposed fraud was on too big a scale, even for him. He had always made it a point of principle, to pay at least a third of the value of jewellery he acquired, on the firm's behalf, from proud old maids and the impoverished ancient nobility.

"Get them at your own price," groaned the baron, "and I'll give you fifty per cent commission." It was like parting with his blood, but he was as well aware as Voussard of the present value of the stones in which, before the war, he had prudently sunk a large part of his capital. (*Continued on page 65*)

*A matter of quality and taste*

WORCESTER TEA JAR *Dr. Wall Period (1751-1783)*

"What a priceless jar! Surely you shouldn't use it for tea?"

"Why not? That's what it was meant for. The family have used it since great-great-grandmamma's time."

"And you fill it with the choicest tea, I suppose?"

"My dear, how did you know I'm using Brooke Bond 'Choicest'? George forgot to bring the tea I have been getting specially from Town, so I got some of this delicious blend from the grocer in the High Street. Thought I'd discovered something, yet you already know about it!"

"I didn't know until you told me. But *now* I know."

**Brooke Bond recommend their 'Choicest' tea to all who enjoy and appreciate a fine blend.**
*Freshly delivered weekly to grocers everywhere.*
*Put it on your weekly shopping order.*

For Christmas
LUNCH TABLETS
CHOCOLAT AMÈRE
Lindt
BITTER
¼ LB. NET
THE
CHOCOLATE
OF THE
CONNOISSEUR
Lindt
LUNCH TABLETS
CHOCOLAT SUISSE
PLAIN VANILLA
Lindt
Lindt FULL CREAM MILK CHOCOLATE TEDDY BEARS

It was a powerful temptation. Forty thousand francs would represent a fortune to a man like Thibaud, and the firm of Chambon did not reward its representatives so lavishly that a commission of fifty per cent would be negligible.

"And the explanation—to Monsieur Thibaud?"

"Holy Joseph and Mary! Does a sum like that need explanation to a person in his position?"

Voussard's eyes narrowed; he wondered. A person may be very simple, without being of necessity a fool. To confront a man like Thibaud with the flagrant proof of his wife's infidelity came uncomfortably near murder. Question, was it economic to commit murder for a paltry twenty thousand francs? He was about to suggest that Monsieur de Bellefeuilles should raise his ante, when Thibaud, apologizing, returned to the room.

"So now you know all there is to tell about the little weakness of Madame Thibaud!" he said tenderly, as he refilled the glasses.

"Charming," murmured Voussard, avoiding the eyes of his *vis-à-vis*. "But you were about to tell us of your wife's last wishes monsieur."

"Ah!"—the many chins of Monsieur Thibaud multiplied with his smile. "They concerned her favourite niece, Angèle. She wished the little Angèle to have the ear-rings on her marriage, as a souvenir of affection from one who always loved her like a mother."

"A touching thought," said Voussard, wondering if the same idea had occurred to the baron as to him: that it might be easier, when the time came, to do business with the little Angèle than with Monsieur Thibaud.

"And that is what turned my mind today to me dear wife's little weakness," said Thibaud happily. "Angèle and her husband are expected this afternoon; I, as the uncle by marriage of the bride, shall request the privilege of putting these myself in her ears." Lifting the ear-rings to his lips, he bestowed a smacking kiss on each. "That shall be my reward for parting with these treasured relics of my beloved wife."

"And the young couple," said Voussard, "will no doubt settle here, in Artèmise."

## The Little Weakness Of Madame Thibaud

He sent a meaning look at the baron.

"Unfortunately, no, monsieur." Thibaud shook his head. "The husband is in the American Army; he was billeted on the family of my brother-in-law in Toulon. They are not even staying the night, but going straight on to Le Havre, whence they are sailing for the United States. I do not suppose," he murmured, as he clasped his hands over the ear-rings and pressed them mournfully to his heart, "I shall ever see these again."

A feeling of inexplicable relief flowed, to his surprise, through Voussard's being. His smile at Monsieur de Bellefeuilles, who, with a smothered groan, had collapsed in his chair, blended—he hoped successfully—regret with necessary submission to the inevitable.

"One has always one's pleasant memories," he observed, as he rose. "My felicitations—to Madame Angèle."

END

# Entertaining The Younger Set

(*Continued from page 16*)

One can hardly imagine that the attractive, young-looking creator of "Muffin the Mule" is a grandmother, but how many of us would like this sort of granny in the family who organizes the most successful of all possible parties for her grandchildren.

First of all she clears a room of furniture and any knicknacks and rolls away the rugs, so that the children can romp around without fear of trouble. Into this room are piled two heaps of toys, Richard's toys at one end and Susie's toys at the other end. As each small boy arrives, he is shown in to explore the forts, soldiers, space-guns, fire-engines, cowboy-suits, marbles, which he finds amongst the boy's treasures; the little girls are led to the dolls, tea-sets, prams, cots, nurses' uniforms, coloured chalks, boxes of shells, etc., in the girl's pile. Soon they are all comparing toys and making friends.

After a quarter of an hour left to themselves to get to know each other, the youngsters are quite ready for some games, but they like games where everyone can join in.

Miss Mills has found that her own group of children like someone to sit down at the piano and play a medley with all the boys joining in when it comes to a "tinkly" marching song and the girls dancing around when the rhythm changes to a waltz, and they all jump about clowning to "funny music."

Miss Mills has her own ideas about what the young guests enjoy for party teas. Like most postwar mothers and grandmothers, she has found that the modern girls and boys dislike rich sweets and cakes, although they do like pretty, colourful food and with some thought party-teas can be made amusing. For instance, because Richard is so keen on aeroplanes, his clever granny arranges the table with the centre-piece as an airfield with a toy plane on a strip made of iced sponge-cake for a runway, and crazy oddments like marshmallow flying-saucers dotted around.

Miss Mills gives a special treat in telling the guests that they may go fruit-picking after tea. And off they go to pick off the apples and bananas and tangerines and other fruits which are tied to the tree and also to plants or hooks dotted around the room.

Miss Mills is lucky, because she has her own puppets to introduce and a new one called "Puffer-dog" is especially good for small children. The child can get its whole hand into the top of the puppet's head and not just the fingers to make it nod. Other parents, without such a genius in the family, who need help to organize things, may hire a children's entertainer from an agency who usually charge about four guineas for a half-hour show plus any travelling expenses, and give conjuring or Punch and Judy shows. Punch and Judy is very moderated for small children, because nowadays no one believes in showing them the frightening hanging scene, but the kids do still like good old Punch and Toby.

Here again the experienced entertainers consider half-an-hour quite long enough to keep the children sitting still, and even then they must all join in the show and take an active part. Any small boy who is too restless is invited up to the stage to "help." He is given a "Magic Wand" to hold and he stands there quietly and very important, just holding on grimly until further notice.

Another professional secret all good entertainers use with children is to let them feel very superior by finding out mistakes. In a conjuring trick nothing goes right. The conjurer apologizes and tries and tries, but, to the children's delight, nothing happens.

When at last he does get going, he slips up here and there with the audience yelling advice. "Look! Here is a blue handkerchief. Well, children, watch carefully and it will turn to red." "It hasn't changed at all." "It hasn't? Oh dear, I do hope nothing's wrong again—well, now has it gone red?" "No! it's gone yellow!" shriek the youngsters.

To sum up—the whole success of a children's party like any party lies in some careful forethought and not merely leaving everything to chance. Not too much planning or organization, of course, but enough to keep everything moving merrily so that the little guests really do mean it when they say, "Thank you so much for the lovely party."

END

# The Night The Animals Hear

(*Continued from page 13*)

boy used to feed the robin hopping round His mother's door. The robin never left the sepulchre till the Resurrection, and at the Ascension joined in the angels' song.

Holly and mistletoe both have close ties with superstition and ancient story. Mistletoe, it is said, is a "heal-all"—a magical cure for every malady and an antidote to poison.

Kissing under the mistletoe seems to be a distinctly English custom and its ancient origin is hard to trace, but certainly the spirit of fertility was always believed to exist in the "sacred mistletoe bough" and this would lend itself to love between the sexes, especially at Christmas when a certain happy licence is permitted. The correct ritual is for the man to pluck a berry from the bough for each kiss. When all the berries are picked, the privilege ceases. Hence the belief that mistletoe without berries holds no magic.

Holly was endowed with sacredness and magic. In the north of England nine holly leaves tied with nine knots in a handkerchief and placed under the pillow was said to bring prophetic dreams. Practical even in their superstition the northerners used smooth-leaved holly and in many counties still only this kind is hung as decoration. Spiked holly, declared the soothsayers, was unpopular with witches, and the thorns and red berries no doubt have close association with the Passion.

The fir tree twinkling with lights, festooned with gifts, is sometimes spoken of as a modern institution, but this is far from true.

The fir with its fingered branches, so suitable for the bearing of gifts, has a beautiful and moving legend coupling it with St. Wilfrid. While the famous missionary was chopping down an oak that had been the object of idolatrous worship, a storm blasted it. But just behind it, unharmed, stood a young fir tree, raising its green spires to the stars. Pointing to it, St. Wilfrid said to his followers: "This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy-tree tonight. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of wood. It is the symbol of endless life, for its leaves are always green, see how it points upwards to heaven. Let this be called the tree of Christ-child; gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your homes—there it will shelter loving gifts and acts of kindness."

There is a pretty story also about the institution of the *Weihnachtsbaum* by the great religious teacher, Martin Luther. When Luther was wandering one Christmas Eve under the clear winter sky lit by a thousand stars, he set up for his children a tree with countless candles as an image of the starry Heaven whence Christ came down.

Santa Claus or St. Nicholas is known to us rather as an incarnation of Christmas than as a saint with a day of his own (December 6). But Santa Claus has probably come to us from across the Atlantic, for the Dutch once took him to America. St. Nicholas, the present-giving saint, is the patron of sailors, prisoners and boys, and the legends about him are nearly all concerned with his generosity to the young.

It is said that Saint Nicholas was a prodigy from his birth, for in his first bath he stood up and joined his hands in thanksgiving to God. His parents died when the saint was still a youth, leaving him with great wealth which he distributed to the poor. A legend relates that a certain nobleman was reduced to such great poverty that his three daughters were starving. Nicholas, hearing this, went by night and found the daughters sleeping while their father wept. The saint threw a purse of gold in at the window and crept away. The father gave it as a marriage portion to one of his daughters, and the gift was repeated for the second and the third.

Pretty fantasies and, under the cloak of Christmas enchantment, we believe them.

END

# Oh, Love Thy Neighbour

(*Continued from page 19*)

trussed turkeys in the warm Métro, dreaming their vagabond shoe-string dreams. . . .

The cold Seine flowing under beautiful white bridges, the little Christmas trees outside the café doors powdered in snow and hung with red baubles, the singing rising and drifting from stained glass windows as Mass was chanted, the *frou-frou* girls kicking their legs in the night clubs, the *pop* ! of champagne corks in the Lido ! And the Rolls-Royce of the de Rocheville ! *Alors—Paris, je reviens !* Chris Jennings lifted her chin, walked like Ava Gardner, felt like Lady Christina de Jenninges, raised one saucy eyebrow at the customs man who winked and stared at her ankles—ran and felt Jean-Louis' cold cheek against hers. First one cheek, then the other. French fashion.

"Jean-Louis ! *Comment ça va !*" She laughed, bending back in his arms, looking up into a fine pale face and burning Latin eyes.

"Chris ! *Chérie ! Ma rose d'Angleterre !* How are you ! Oh, how I have missed myself of you !" He took a deep breath as if he were indeed bending over roses and held her away from him, frowning with joy.

HOLDING hands, laughing, breathless with the shyness of meeting again, they wound their way to the car. The chauffeur swept off his cap and swung open the door of the Rolls emblazoned with the de Rocheville coat-of-arms and Chris felt like a million dollars. She nestled in the grey upholstered seat, avidly absorbing the Parisian voices. The car swam forward, hooting people aside; they were away ! The windows clouded over; inside the car there was a warm, purring heating. . . . She looked into Jean-Louis' long-lashed eyes and as he went on talking and gesticulating in his own language she found her thoughts switching over to French again automatically. And what her thoughts were saying, quite shamelessly, in French was Oh, love me ! Love me !

It wasn't until they had covered six of the fifteen kilometres to the château that lay in the Forest of Barbizon that she realized Jean-Louis was not quite himself. Glad to see her he was, but clearly preoccupied. She remembered in a rush his moods, and knew something was wrong.

"What's on your mind, *cher ami?*"

"Oh ! But you can see I am enraged?" The veil dropped from his eyes and he looked wildly frustrated. "Oh, but I can't tell you ! I am enraged with Madame, my mother ! You cannot imag-een." Chris put one hand soothingly on his knee and raised her eyebrows. "She has gone mad !" His voice rose as, Frenchwise, he flung himself immediately into the crisis of the moment. "*Completement folle !*" He snatched up her hand. "This should have been the most wonderful Noël," he cried, "but my mother is ruining all with her *caprices* ! You cannot imag-een !" He struck his palm against his forehead. "It is desperate !"

"If you'd only explain." Chris said, rather annoyed. After four months he should surely be able to concentrate on her for an hour or so.

"She 'as 'ad a—how you say?—a *whim*," he said, distraught. And Chris's eyes widened and she couldn't stifle her giggles when she heard what the eccentric Marquise had dreamed up for the great Christmas Eve dinner party—which was the main annual celebration at Verlan. The dinner party began at nine on Christmas Eve and ended at five or six on Christmas morning and there were usually, Jean-Louis said, anything up to a hundred guests.

Tomorrow, however, it was to be a little smaller, because the Marquise was only inviting people she knew hated each other. She had carefully worked out the seating arrangements and enemies were to be placed inescapably side by side. Catholic next to atheist, Russian diplomat next to American capitalist, and so on.

"She says it is her Christmas motif," Jean-Louis fumed. "*Motif !* They must get together, drink champagne, enter into the spirit of Noël, love their neighbours and forgive their enemies, she says, and it will be most diverting ! But is she mad? She *is* ! There will be war, I am telling you, Chris ! Nobody won't speak to nobody ! Diplomatic relations will be severed ! And then," he clapped his hand to his head again, "and then, not only international but *personal* ! She will put the actress Francine Leroi next to her first 'usband, whom she detest ! Can you imagine ! What are you laughing for? It is going to be the chaos *abominable* ! Oh, the shame for the *famille* ! *Oh, quel horreur !*" he shuddered.

"Well, calm down, *mon vieux*," Chris said drily. "It's just going to be like a United Nations Conference, that's all."

"But that will not be amusing !" Jean-Louis cried. "Thank heavens you are here, Chris ! You will be the life and soul—You are on form? You must sing, you must dance! One counts on you."

Yes, can't you just see me? Chris thought desperately. Stone cold sober—can't you just see me being the life and soul of the party on orange juice? While everybody else is well away? I'm going to be the most crashing flop.

"There are two hundred bottles of champagne," Jean-Louis calmed a little and settled back against her arm at the comforting thought. "Moët, 1943."

Suddenly Chris giggled. This was the difference between France and England, this was the quickening in tempo that caught her unawares every time she crossed the Channel. This was France again—the madness, the excitement, the impassioned gestures !

"Oh, Jean-Louis ! It's so good to see you !" She lay back, laughing up at him. He looked down at her and his mood switched again. He forgot completely his mother, the party, even that it was Christmas. He took her in his arms and kissed her madly, whispering like Charles Boyer, twisting her hair in his fingers, while the chauffeur, watching through the driving mirror, got so interested he all but ran the Rolls into the back of a truck.

Emerging from his embrace, her thoughts running wild—he did love her didn't he? but how serious were those champagne kisses? —Chris saw that they were turning into the massive wrought-iron gates. The approach was long and dead straight—the French conception of beauty was always symmetry—the château standing out dignified and gracious, its corner turrets snow-crusted in the moonlight, the rows of great white windows gleaming darkly.

As always, when she saw the Château de Verlan (and this was the fourth time though never before at Christmas), Chris wondered at its combination of severity and delicacy. And as always she found in the aspect of Jean-Louis' ancestral home something of his own character: it was wondrously fascinating and yet its formality made it remote, as if it stood back and withheld a centuries-old secret behind its inscrutably aristocratic façade. A secret to which she was a foreigner.

"WELCOME ! Welcome ! Welcome !" La Marquise, soignée in black velvet and white lace and wafts of Arpège, hurried to meet Chris as she walked down the stone-flagged hall to where her hosts and their guests lounged on leather sofas, wooden milking stools, ancient carved oak banquet chairs with leather backs, and Moroccan poufs, around the enormous fire-place where tree trunks blazed as logs. "*Ma chère Christine ! Quel plaisir !* How is England? How is *triste* London? Raining—yes of course. And the meat rationing? Oh, la, la, wonderful complexion this child has !" She turned to the Marquis who bowed and kissed Chris's frozen fingers.

Then the Marquise, unceremoniously pointing people out with her spectacles, introduced her to the fifteen or twenty people who made up the house party. She hardly saw the faces as they inclined, bowed, smiled before her—she was too conscious of the suddenly remembered smell, the smell of leather and pine logs and woodsmoke and dogs and brandy . . . And too conscious of the thing above all (apart from the personality of the Marquise) dominating the hall: It was quite the most enormous Christmas tree Chris had ever seen. How it ever got in there she couldn't think. It towered so that its tapering, sinewy point grazed the great oak beams, cast half the hall in shadow. Its side branches brushed the tusks of the wild boars' heads on the walls.

"How do you do?"

"Hi !—Been dyin' to meet you !"

"*Enchanté*, Mademoiselle."

"*Asseyez-vous*," the Marquis gave her his chair by the fire. "Now what would you like? The little cognac to warm the heart, yes?"

Chris felt her heart sink at least half an inch. She looked up, trying to smile nonchalantly. "Not cognac, thank you. I'm —I'm not allowed—I mean," she turned in desperation to her hostess. "Could I possibly have a cup of tea, Madame?"

Everyone roared with laughter. "The Engleesh !" someone shrieked. "*Tea*—at Christmas !" "Jiminy cricket !" an American waved his cigar, slapped his knee and guffawed. "But you can't be serious?" Jean-Louis stood over her anxiously.

"Of course she wants tea !" the Marquise snapped. "Josef, tea for Mademoiselle Chris. With *citron*, no?" But everyone was still chuckling and she saw expectant, admiring glances. Heaven help me, she thought, they think I'm being funny. It's really awful to have this Bright Spark reputation. They've none of them any idea of the state of my liver !

"WHO? That's what I want to know !" cried the voice of a Scandinavian beside her. "Who is going to save Europe?" He waved a lobster claw in the air. It was Christmas Eve and the great banquet table groaned with food and wine, glasses tinkled, the room was loud with the clatter of plates, the waiters flitted like moths behind the guests, and candle-light fell from high silver candelabra on to bare backs, glittering jewels, white ties and tails (the men looked like so many penguins), and a five-piece orchestra played in an adjoining room.

It was Christmas Eve—and Chris was furious. In the first place she had not been seated next to Jean-Louis—as far from him as possible, in fact. He was at the far end of the table next to a little bedroom-eyed French girl, while here she was surrounded by a huge American millionaire called Ollie Goldenberg, a Russian with a narrow face and whiskers by the outlandish name of Mr. Ivanovitch Vanskybottom or something.

There was a sulky lady in sequins and green eye-shadow sitting next to a man who was so angry at having been put next to his first wife he had not yet opened his mouth, and ate in frozen silence, thin-lipped and unsmiling. He looks, Chris thought, as if he might want to do somebody in with his cheese knife. I don't blame him either. Everyone feels more or less the same way. The Marquise couldn't have worked out her scheme better ! Just listen to the atmosphere —enough to make your teeth chatter ! Not a laugh; conversation cold and stilted and anything but Christmasy ! And ——

"I saw your last film," a dazed-looking Frenchman with a hearing-aid spoke to her in English. "You were quite superb ! But *consummate* acting—"

"I wasn't in a film," Chris tried to tell him for the third time, but he was stone deaf. "I'm not an actress, you've got me all wrong—"

"Yes, yes, indeed. And *Pêche Melba* was delicious, too, but not so subtle. The gown you wore in the Monte Carlo scene—*exquise !* Might I be permitted to tell you, *chère Mademoiselle*, that you are the most beautiful actress—"

"Oh be quiet and eat your turkey you silly old thing," she said, with a nasty smile which he entirely misinterpreted. She was aware that his knee veered round and did its best to press against hers for the rest of the meal. Meanwhile she could (*Continued on page 68*)

*Give her the loveliest Christmas present of all*

# KAYSER BONDOR

*nylons of course*

GIVE HER Kayser Bondor nylons—*and you give delight!* How else could you say so tactfully, so practically, that she deserves the very best? To give her individual top-to-toe proportioned fit, Kayser Bondor nylons are made in 6 sizes 8½″ to 11″ and 3 leg lengths in some styles. Beautifully fashioned, beautifully finished . . . for longer, lovelier wear.

12 denier 66 gauge at 12/6

15 denier in 51 and 60 gauge at 9/11 and 10/6

30 denier at 8/11 and 9/6

40 denier at 8/11

Lacelon in 30 denier at 11/6

*Be sure you give her Kayser Bondor nylons—they show you think a lot of her.*

neither relax nor think with the argument that had begun and was gaining momentum up and down the dinner table.

"Economically, France is the sick man of Europe!" a Polish journalist sneered, waving narrow hands on which an emerald glittered.

"Sick man!" growled Ollie Goldenberg through a mouthful of chestnut stuffing, "it's the goddam corpse, if you ask me!"

"Worse," the Russian said, "It is the *grave* of Europe——"

"*Alors!*" A small wiry Frenchman, scarlet with rage, waved his glass as if he would throw it. He stood up, upsetting champagne down his jacket. "*Vive la France!*" he shouted.

"And as for England," Ollie Goldenberg went on. "What do they think they've bin doing? Letting the E.D.C. go down the drain while they worry about *road repairs in Kenya*!" He snorted and Chris felt her blood rising. "Still up to their ears in Empire, can't realize the world's changed. Can't face up to the fact that world power has shifted to the U.S.A.—"

"U.S.A.!" Chris said witheringly. "*Baseball!*" she added, as if that were enough to condemn any race of people anywhere. "Why if it hadn't been for England—"

"The policy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—" the Russian whined, flicking delicate little bread pellets apparently unconsciously in the direction of the sapphire stud on the American's broad chest. . . .

"Champagne, Mademoiselle?" A waiter stood a bucket on the table beside her. A bucket tied in a snow-white napkin, a silver bucket rattling ice cubes against a green bottle. Bubbles fizzing . . . She felt her resistance weakening and caught it in the nick of time. "Just bring me another lemonade, please," she whispered hoarsely. "A nice, strong, heady, double lemonade!"

She looked around her, trying not to do so through a jaundiced eye. All the faces were flushed with wine and champagne while she alone remained stone cold sober. She felt left out. And peering past the Austrian Baron with one glass eye who was trying to tell her he was sure he had met her in the Stork Club in New York, she caught a distant glimpse of Jean-Louis flirting with the eighteen-year-old French girl in diamonds and green eyes.

OH, I'm really enjoying this, she thought. This is really wonderful, the best Christmas I've ever spent! This is the real Christmas spirit! Good will towards all men! Political arguments, crumbling counts, a deaf Frenchman . . . and now the *tooth-picks*. How can you love your neighbour as yourself when he's tooth-picking behind his hand and deaf into the bargain? A dirgy polonaise drifted wearily through from the musicians in the other room.

Uncle Hector would have walked out, she thought, suddenly seeing a vivid picture of him standing in front of the piano singing "A Rose in a Gar-den of Thorns," and Mother wiping her eyes, and Ronnie handing round the nuts and raisins, and Aunt Matty telling everyone how tiddly she's getting . . . and Daddy with a paper hat slipped over one eye wondering how Chris is enjoying herself in France. If only he knew how lonely and fed up Chris is . . .!

She winced as yet another cork popped, trying not to be depressed by the music—and caught a glimpse of the great Christmas tree in the hall beyond. A star winked on the top of it. It seemed to be flashing her a little message.

"*Por favor,*" a Spaniard was pleading with a Rumanian ex-princess in ear-rings as large as live goldfish. "We willa notta discuss religion. There is only one True Faith—"

Oh, be quiet. For goodness' sake! Can't you all forget your petty arguments and enjoy yourselves! Just because you're all away from home you think you've got to behave like stuffy ambassadors! Can't we have some different kind of music? People should laugh at Christmas dinner! Laughter and love . . . Really, you make me so cross, she glowered along the rows of anxious, arguing, defensive, flushed faces. If I could only half get into the Christmas spirit, if I could only get worked up to it, I'd *do something!* Yes, instead of sitting here like a melting ice-cube I'd get up and dance! *Dance on the table!* No, I wouldn't. I'd get up and do an imitation of you all—pretending it was a United Nations Conference. World Peace, I'd call the sketch, and I'd make you ashamed of your silly selves! I'd do the Russian delegate first, busily composing a Note to say he couldn't come to the next meeting; then I'd walk out for France; then I'd go off like a cuckoo clock for Switzerland; chew gum for America; doze and snore for England; spit and rage for Germany; gabble an unintelligible sing-song for China. . . .

She almost saw herself doing it. She felt her blood tingling with the old irresistible longing to stir up laughter, and something snapped within her. "Excuse me,"—she took the Scandinavian's glass of champagne and gulped it to the last drop. ("In Aid of a Worthy Cause, darling," she hastily assured her conscience which had suddenly taken on the form and substance of Mrs. Jennings at her most reproachful.) She felt her long dress slide around her ankles as she got up. She was half aware that the talking faded out in her immediate vicinity as she climbed on to the seat of her chair, steadying herself with one hand on the Frenchman's head. "Please clear all this away," she said firmly to an open-mouthed waiter, "I'm going to stand on the table."

"Mademoiselle—?" He hadn't quite understood.

"I'm going to stand on the table," Chris's voice rose, and more people turned their heads. "Get those ice-cream dishes out from under my feet," she told the astonished millionaire. Her head was spinning, her cheeks crimsoning. But it was too late to turn back. Everyone was waiting gaping like guppy fish. What if it's a flop? Goodness, she thought, what am I doing on the table? I'm nervous. My knees are caving in. I'm going to pass out. I—("You go ahead and do it, there's my girl!" she heard Uncle Hector's voice inside her. "Make 'em laugh! Go on!")

"Oh, bravo Chris!" Jean-Louis' voice came penetratingly from the other end of the table. "She's going to do a dance! She always do dances better on table-tops. Clear the way, please! Everybodys! Stand back. The *Porgy And Bess* one, Chris—!"

"Silence, please," Chris said with a dead-pan face. "This is no joke, no light entertainment. Christmas dinner isn't a place for *hilarity*—tt! tt!" She drew a deep breath and pulled a droll face with one disapproving eyebrow in the air and the corners of her mouth drooping, holding up a spoon as a monocle. "Far too much levity in the world," she paused, leaning to take the tooth-pick out of the Frenchman's dazed fingers and dropping it with facetious distaste on the floor. "This is Christmas Eve, so let us try to concentrate on Peace. Let's pretend we're at a U.N. Peace Conference——"

SHE went off into contortion after contortion, and once the first burst of laughter came (very properly from an Englishman who had said nothing but "Bung-ho" all the evening because he was seated between a Dutch brother and sister who had not been speaking to each other since 1944 and knew not a word of English) she was all right. She was well away. She felt entirely intoxicated. She cared not a rap for anything or anyone except what she was imitating. Just a blur of faces . . . and now she had to wait for the tides of laughter to subside, laughter that threatened to drown her out.

Keep it dumb-show, she was telling herself as she went on. So that they can all understand—even if they're Dutch, or deaf. No nationalism, no language difficulty. . . . Although she was at the present moment mimicking a frustrated long-haired delegate getting mixed up with his head-phones, her audience had no need for the head-phones that translated one involved political speech into another. Keep it dumb-show, she told herself. The laughter went to her head . . . it was the best sound on earth!

Roars of applause greeted her as she collapsed in a curtsy, her dress knocking over two glasses and a coffee-cup. They were clapping, standing up, the American was beating his Russian friend on the shoulder, the Russian rocked to and fro, still chuckling, stuttering something in Russian. The sulky woman had laughed so much she had got some of her thick mascara into her eyes and her first husband was trying to help her, handkerchief in hand . . . Jean-Louis came hurrying, pushing aside the Scandinavian, to hand her down from the table. "Oh, you done it!" he cried, his grammar going to pot. "You done it! I have the ache in the estomac!"

The musicians, who had stopped playing and gathered round the door to watch the diversion, now went back to their positions and launched into a wildly jazzy rendition of "La Vie en Rose." Everyone dispersed from the table. Dancing couples whirled and laughter rose in the air, streamers hit her in the back, wound round her neck . . . Somewhere giant crackers exploded. Even the waiters were tipsy now, they tripped a little, missed doorways, called out to each other. . . .

NOW that she'd dispensed with her little turn, Chris was in the mood for love. She wanted nothing less than to lie in Jean-Louis' arms and let him pet and adore her. And yet there was not a hope in the world! Every now and then she caught his eyes over some bare shoulder, pleadingly on hers. But as a result of her moment of limelight, she was in demand. One after another the men came to ask her to dance: two of them proposed to take her on a little jaunt to Monte Carlo in the morning. One—a bearded one—suggested they leave tonight for Nice . . . All the time Chris waited wildly and increasingly hopelessly for a few minutes alone with Jean-Louis.

But even when they finally managed to catch up with each other, they were not alone. The Marquise had sent for the Italian chef, Nicolai, who, Jean-Louis explained, was a natural tenor and always sang after Christmas dinner at Verlan. The slim Nicolai stood before the orchestra, shoulders drooping, his face white and his hands nervously gripped behind him. There was a hush, everyone stood still or sat around in the corners and shadows, and when the sweet, slightly wavering voice rose in the air, Chris found herself beside the young girl with diamonds and green eyes with whom she had glimpsed Jean-Louis at dinner. The girl had been introduced as Marie-Clare, the Vicomtesse d'Aubervigny; she was very petite and pretty and now that she was close to her Chris was ashamed of her thoughts at dinner—clearly Marie-Clare was an innocent little thing straight out of school.

They spoke in whispers where they sat on a red couch far away at the other side of the salon from the orchestra. Jean-Louis, who had been sitting with them, suddenly excused himself and tip-toed away, leaving them together. Something in the way the girl's eyes followed him made Chris look at her curiously. And even more so when, with a very pronounced accent, she whispered in English, "He is the beautiful man, is it not so?"

Chris nodded, cleared her throat. "Have you known him long?" she said, sociably indulgent.

The clear green eyes turned on her, smiling shyly. "*Alors,*" she made a gentle, deprecating gesture with a little mittened hand, "you see, I have been engaged for marriage to Jean-Louis since I had seven years. But know him—? Not so. I have been for three years at a convent in Switzerland. . . ."

Chris dropped her eyes instantly in case Marie-Clare looked up and caught her expression. Sitting there, dimly aware of the Italian's sad and lovely song in the hushed room, she waited for her heart to break. But the seconds passed and it didn't even crack.

"It is a lovely soirée, is it not?" came Marie-Clare's soft voice. "I am so glad to meet you. I admire very much your imitations on the dinner table. I never see that before. I laugh very much and my father say what a pity more peoples do not understand the value of laughter. . . ." (*Continued on page 70*)

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Nicolai's voice died away, clapping broke out. Someone came to invite the little Vicomtesse to dance and Chris sat still, alone, quite lost amid the strange crowds. Why did I come? she wondered. Why aren't I at home?—it's Christmas. Yet it was not a despairing loneliness. In a way it was a relief. Things explained themselves now. The reason why Jean-Louis had never used the familiar "*tu*," but always the formal "*vous*" when speaking to her . . . The reason why their kisses had always been champagne kisses, lovely but lacking in seriousness . . . The reason for his non-committalness, the explanation why she had always been aware of the impossibility of ever being able to *pin him down* . . . that had only made him more fascinating.

And above all the reason for that secret, withdrawn expression she had always imagined the château wore—an expression which had tried to warn her right from the beginning last year when she had first been invited here with an international group of friends from Paris, had tried to tell her gently but firmly that this was the French home of the de Rochevilles and that though she would always be warmly welcomed as a friend, she who was a foreigner must never consider herself as in any way *belonging*. . . .

She rose and walked across to the window. Standing with her face against the cold pane, she watched as several cars started away through the snow, taking guests to attend Midnight Mass. Soon the bells would ring out and it would be Christmas Day.

Now at last she was in Jean-Louis' arms—dancing. He danced wonderfully, lifting her off her feet. He was whispering sweet things into her ear, but Chris knew now they were fairy-tales. And this, she was thinking, this Christmas in Paris, is just one leaf out of the story-book of my life. It is a short, gay, beautiful little page. But the pages must be turned over and it won't last, only as a memory.

"You are light as a flower," he was saying, his low voice close to her ear. "*Ma rose d'Angleterre!*" (Was she dreaming, or did she detect a note of special gentleness in his voice? Could it be that he had deliberately left her and Marie-Clare alone together?) "Chris, I shall never forget . . ." When suddenly the music stopped dead, and changed into a chiming—a pealing of bells. The dancers stopped in their tracks, someone cried out something, Jean-Louis' lips were full on hers, "*Joyeux Noël!*" he whispered and almost immediately he was gone. Still trembling from the impact of the kiss, she felt somebody else's moustache tickle her cheek. "*Joyeux Noël!*" spluttered the Austrian baron.

Looking round, dazed, Chris saw what was happening. Everyone ran around kissing everyone else, it was the custom in France. She was caught up in the whirling spirit of it, and her face grew sore with kisses and she was laughing, throwing her arms around the Marquis's neck now: "This is a wonderful Christmas! Thank you so much for having me!" the childish English phrase broke out before she could stop it. . . . .

Dizzily, winding her way through the throng, she didn't know quite where she was going, couldn't quite see either—the hot tears that burned in her eyes blurred everything, the silver star on the tree, the jewels and fairy lights, the frost and snow, the sparkling eyes, the colours of the dresses—ran into each other in one kaleidoscopic blur. She bumped into someone. Looking up, she saw the dazed little Frenchman with the hearing-aid.

"May I permit myself to have this dance with the famous actress?" he bowed. He was very flushed and pink. She nodded, speechless, let him jog her into an old-fashioned waltz. "You will forgive me, but my memory is *lamentable*!" he was panting. "*What* is your name again? I know I should not forget famous names, but—"

"Chris," she cried into the hearing-aid. "Chris Jennings. Playing her most poignant rôle of the year!"

"And a very *Joyeux Noël* to you, too," he said, not having heard a word.

END

# Fancy Dress Affair

(*Continued from page 20*)

recently. You add two or three yards of cheapest rayon lamé to a slinky evening dress, and cut out the head-dress, neckband and girdle of buckram covered with gold-lamé ribbon and studded with jewels. If you are too lazy or rushed to get a fancy costume, there are other ways to dodge time and trouble. Perhaps you have a really lovely evening gown which you are longing to wear. Well, if it is a really stately classical style, you can go as the Grand Duchess, merely by adding a very brilliant-coloured broad ribbon over one shoulder sparkling with "jewelled" decorations. Be careful not to choose blue which may look too near apeing the genuine order. Add the biggest tiara you can make or hire or borrow long gloves and an enormous fan rope of "pearls" or "diamonds."

A débutante can get away with wearing her white frilly débutante-frock and look like Merle Oberon in the gown she wore at one of those fabulous Venetian balls. This costume was inspired by a design for an eighteenth-century Titania and was a diaphanous dream-like creation draped with superb roses. But any girl with a white fluffy ballet-length dress can garland it with paper roses, make a wreath for her hair and achieve the same effect.

Personally, I love the Charles II period with its satins and laces and ribbons and frills and rich materials, or there are many ideas from the *Knights Of The Round Table* or the *Beau Brummell* films or the Oscar Wilde plays, with their bustles and great hats and elaborate ball-gowns. As these are too ambitious to rig up at home they may, of course, be hired from any theatrical costumier, but few people seem to realize that many of the costumes that are used in films can be hired for a couple of guineas upwards from the film studio. However, Pinewood Studios say their best costumes get quickly booked up for the festive season, and they have, of course, only a limited supply. Sometimes it's a good idea to hire just a head-dress or jewellery to give a professional touch to a simple home-made rig-out.

If you want to be amusing and witty in your costume, what about the 1920s? You may be sure to get a laugh by wearing the type of dress of thirty years ago, a rage since the success of the musical show, *The Boy Friend*, or, even better, the earlier twenties period, which has been overlooked and is just asking to be caricatured. Have you, perhaps, some idea of those "chocolate-box" hair styles all loops and dips and the headband worn low on the forehead and sprouting antler-like ornaments, and the low-waisted swathed frocks, and the apricot-coloured stockings and fussy shoes? I myself have only just realized that clothes of this period may well be found stored away in the attic of middle-aged aunts and cousins because they have now become almost "period."

Although some men have great fun dressing up, many of my women acquaintances have great difficulty in persuading husbands and boy-friends to co-operate. Glynis Johns gave a party where all the men came as tramps and as well as letting themselves go with all manner of hobo and tough-guy variations, they were quite comfortably dressed, too. Comfort is a point; so many costumes start out by being most effective but are too uncomfortable to sustain while dancing or eating and halfway through the evening nothing is left of them at all, after shedding first one and then another part. And as for getting home towards dawn when there are no taxis available and either a dense fog or a frost to cope with . . . well, the crinoline and high heels aren't so good. But what of that? Always "dressing-up" has been part of every festival season, when merrymaking turns us all into carefree spirits just for this one night of the Fancy Dress Ball.

END

# Tubby Horse

(*Continued from page 31*)

took me out to show me to the horses, and they are all lovely; good hunter to steeplechaser class; and then they have Tubby. We came upon him in a paddock munching the grass all by his little self. I wish you could see him. As they explained to me, it's too early for him to be out to grass yet, but he was turned out during the day while his bedroom was being re-roofed.

To begin with I should describe Tubby as the curvaceous type of horse. He bulges outwards: hindquarters, chest, sides—all gloriously convex. To say he is well-ribbed up is an understatement. Then he has a big arched neck of the Suffolk Punch type. At the end of this is a broad head too short for the neck. Then to go on with, dear Tubby's legs are too short for his bulk. He is sawn-off. He looks like a Sealyham, or basset-hound, of the horse world.

Now picture him as a sort of ginger-ale colour, with a lot of black mane and tail, and you've got him.

"Well," said Cousin Freddie, "what do you think of old Tubby?"

"He looks up to my weight," I said.

"Good heavens, child," said Cousin Freddie. "Up to your weight! He'd carry a ton. He won't notice you're on him."

"Is he easy to ride?"

"He's all right if he takes to you," said Petronella.

"What on earth happens if he doesn't take to me?"

"Oh, he's got no vice," everybody said. "It's just that he's so stubborn. Come on, Tubby, you old swine."

Pamela, aged eight, went into the paddock, seized Tubby by the forelock and led him forth.

"He'll only do that for Pamela," they explained. "The rest of us could tug for hours."

When Pamela let go of his forelock he looked at us all round, and began to make the most extraordinary faces, putting back his ears and rolling his eyes, just like a horse in a cartoon film.

"Is he suffering much," I asked.

"No. Just asking for titbits?" Whereupon one adult and three children climbed on his back and he began to amble about, smiling broadly. Then he was fed with a most inappropriate assortment of oddments, including a chocolate cream and a fish-paste sandwich.

I gave him half a carrot and he butted me so firmly in the middle I nearly sat down.

"It's all right, Sara," said Pamela joyfully. "That means he *has* taken to you."

After being introduced to dear Tubby, I had to be taken away and introduced to Gran. She is, I suppose, the old girl you refer to as Aunt Dagmar—my great-aunt, of course.

Now she, I felt, didn't take to me so readily as Tubby. She really is rather an alarming old party. Like everyone else here she seems to assume that I was born on a horse. The stories of her own riding days are, I gather, quite mythical. But now she has graduated from Little Miss Daredevil into the school of senior Sybils. She is gaunt and upright. She reminds me of the Ancient Mariner. The glittering eye is certainly there: and portions of the grey beard.

She boomed something at me which I couldn't hear; and I said something which she couldn't catch. Then she raised a number of objections to the idea of my riding Tubby. She can't think why they want to put me on a ridiculous slow animal like that. She commanded Petronella to give up her own "Crackerjack" to me, as the visitor. But Petronella, the sweet girl, refused point blank. "Hell, Gran," was the charming way she put it, "Me lend her Crackerjack? What next?"

They tell me there's (*Continued on page 73*)

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a local point-to-point and horse fiesta in about three weeks' time. We shall ride over and see it a few days before I come back. I must by that time be able to sit on Tubby without falling off or looking too ridiculous because all their friends will be there. The family are hotly discussing which horse is to be entered for what. I gather there are one or two light-hearted events as well as some serious races. It ought to be fun.

They have given me the room up the tower, known as the crow's nest. As you know the house I needn't describe it to you. One practically lives in the treetops, with all the rooks, and though the noise is a bit stunning at times, I like the rook conversation. If I stayed here long enough I might begin to learn the language. As they woke me up very early chattering about all their important affairs, I thought I would spend the time writing this letter.

There is a lovely blue spring air coming in through the window. Everything is bursting into bud. I feel quite that way myself. My bra has broken to begin with.

Goodbye, darling parents. I will let you know how it all goes on.

Be good,

SARA.

Could Ma please send me my low-necked green jumper thing? Yes, I know you said I had better take it. Now I know how right you were. There's a kind of move into other clothes in the evening, and I would like to bring a breath of *haute couture* to this family of centaurs.

Castle Drumcastle,
8 April.

DEAR MA AND PA,

Stiff! Am I stiff? You ask me if I am stiff. Well, as a matter of fact it is beginning to wear off a little bit now. I have ridden miles and miles and miles, up and down banks and braes and in and out of bogs. You remember the schoolboy mistranslation of *Post equitem sedet atra cura*, i.e. After horse exercise the dark woman sits down with care. Well, that's me. He was dead right all the time. She does.

I must tell you all about this riding.

When we first set out I was terrified; all these brilliant riders, and Tubby horse and myself.

"You'll be all right, Sara," said Cousin Freddie. "Ever been over an Irish bank?"

"Absolutely never," I said. "And I've only jumped about a dozen times altogether."

The trouble is they just can't believe that people don't spend half their life riding. However, Cousin Freddie is really very kind.

"Just follow me," he said, "and let Tubby do everything. He's the surest footed horse I've ever known. And he has more common sense than either of my mad daughters. Drop the reins if you're in trouble and hold on to his mane."

So this is what I did, and it worked perfectly. Tubby is as comfortable as an arm chair, and marvellously easy to ride. He scrabbles up the banks instead of jumping them, while I just hang on to his mane. Then he lollops off the other side, and I tend to slip round his neck. Tubby knows just what to do. He elevates his head, and I slide back into the saddle. Sometimes he stops while I do it.

As for hedges, intelligent Tubby waits for all the other horses to go first, picks the weakest spot, and then more or less walks through. That's how we jump fences, Tubby and I. We scarcely leave the ground. They're pretty loose hedges, too. It's a good thing there aren't any posts and rails, or I should be off at once.

Occasionally Tubby suddenly decides on a wild rush. He goes off in a thunderous gallop, as if he were shot from a gun. I think his great idea is to surprise all the other horses and take the lead. Somewhere inside him the spirit of a racehorse lurks: for a moment we feel as if we were winning the National.

I hear shouts of laughter behind me when Tubby sets off on one of his gallops, and then loud cries of "Catch that swine Tubby!" In a minute half a dozen or more of the others sweep by, usually led by Geraldine on a marvellous black, crouching over his neck like a jockey. Then poor old Tubby gives up resignedly and drops to his usual lollopy canter. He wiggles his ears, one forward and one back, to see if anyone else is coming: and he practically says to me, "Well, let those snooty brutes rush about if they want to. I shall slow up now."

"Really, Sara," the centaurs say to me, "your horse control is terrible." They don't realize that Tubby's control of me is absolutely a hundred per cent.

Tubby has one rather alarming habit. If he goes through a gateway with other horses he usually kicks the following horse in the chest, just as he is going through. The first time he did this I couldn't imagine what was happening. He suddenly began to feel like a boat in a choppy sea. Everyone shrieked at me, "Look out! Go away, Sara! Swine Tubby! Hit him, somebody!"

However, no harm was done, and once you know about this little obsession it doesn't matter. He really is the sweetest tempered lamb, and thinks nothing of letting four children ride him round the paddock at once. I wish I could bring him back to London on a lead.

I've had no letter from Jimmy. The brute! What do I care?

Well, dearest parents, be good till I come back,

Yours ever,

SARA.

P.S. What do you think that old Dagmar said to me about Daddy? She said he used to be such a *fat* little boy. I flew to his defence and said, "Oh no, she must be thinking of somebody else, and that he was a tall, noble-looking grey-headed man now; slim, and with a most *distinguished* limp from his service in the Kensington Home Guard."

However, she didn't respond: didn't smile. She continues to think I'm half mad because I ride Tubby. I think she's one of those female troll things they have in Norway—what do they call them—Norns? Yes: she's a Norn. That's what.

Castle Drumcastle,
14 April.

DEAREST MA AND PA,

I am writing this in my bedroom again, and the rooks are really behaving rather badly: an awful lot of their noise is just quarrelling over making their nests. "I want that twig—ARK!" "No, it's mine—AWK!" "You cheat, this was already on our nest—AWK, AWK—ARK ARK"—and so on, till one's head rings.

The weather is lovely. I can see the hill running down to a corner of the lake, and then up again. And old Tubby looking over the railings into the gardens. He wants company. Young Pamela's just coming along to take him back to the stables.

I really am getting fond of my old Tubby. I've taken to grooming him and washing him. The others never seem to bother about him, but they let him wander about with mud on his fetlocks and tummy. So I have made him my little chore. I comb him and brush him. I unravel his mane.

Petronella helps me, and I think of my cousins I like her best. She's so much more cosy than Geraldine and Lambert. Geraldine and Lambert are both extremely clever—scoffing intellectual type. That, combined with the fact that they are the family's star prize-winning riders makes them positively unnerving at times. Geraldine is also extremely good-looking—a beautiful slim shape, slightly aquiline nose; one of those chiselled jobs.

The other day they were both practising bending out in the paddock, and I've never seen anything like it. They take their horses up and down those stakes as if they were on motor-bikes. They go at full gallop, whisk round—zing!—and come back again. To see them doing this and whipping in and out of Camus and Koestler and Gide and Silone all in the same breath is really exotic. It's meant to be. I've made a little rhyme about it:

I gallop with speed
Around Malraux and Gide:
I prance with my pony
On poor old Silone.
Little Sara won't heed

## Tubby Horse

If it's all of it phony,
She's too young to read
Either Sartre or Silone.

Shall I show it to them? To be an audience of one, to two such classy performers does become a bit of a strain. However I've borrowed *Les Faux Monnayeurs* in French off Lambert.

Now Petronella is a dear, and of course, more or less my own age. She's not so alarmingly brilliant or good-looking—or *svelte*. In fact she's quite floppy under the blouse; while Geraldine has certainly never bust any bras. Petro has larger hips and I should say a larger heart than Geraldine. She has a rounder face, and her dark hair goes wild and woolly, but she's got a pair of very nice brown eyes (rather like Tubby's) and she laughs about things rather than *at* people. She could cry on occasion, too, and I doubt if Geraldine could.

Petro, as I've said, helps me clean up my dear Tubby: and she's told me about her boy friend, and so on. She's rather a joke with the rest of the family because she is thought to be their worst rider. She can fall off: she can even funk. However, to be the worst rider among this brood of centaurs is still to be a marvellously good rider. And to be a funk by their standards is to behave with lunatic bravery by mine. But I get rather tired of hearing Geraldine say: "Oh, what's the good of *you* trying, Petro! Get off; I'll make him do it!" The trouble is she does, too. She can make a horse do all sorts of things it never knew it could do.

We are now within a few days of the horse gala. Such a grooming and a clipping and general rubbing up—such a trying of bits and racing saddles you never did see. Yet apparently this is not the really posh meeting in this neighbourhood, but an affair one takes just lightly, as a spree. I shall watch the family perform—and they're all set to win at least two races and the bending competition. They've made six different entries between them. Young Pamela is furious because they won't let her ride in the Junior Ladies—she says she distinctly remembers that they have said "next year" to her for five years. If *that's* true, it means she first began to ask when she was three.

Baby centaurs with pigtails flying,
They keep on trying, trying, trying—

Well, goodbye, parents—be good, while I am not there to watch you.

Yours ever,

SARA.

P.S. I had a nice letter from Jimmy. You know I could get quite fond of that boy—like I am of Tubby. He's sent me a few fatherly tips about riding.

Castle Drumcastle,
24 April.

DEAR MA AND PA,

Guess what. I've ridden in a race. Now you'll probably think the poor girl's gone demented; so I'll tell you all about it.

The day of the point-to-point meeting, last Saturday, was bright and clear. Two or three of the party went off in the car with eats and drinks. Old Norn decided to stay behind and have a bit of a brood. The rest of us rode sedately along the roads, in glittering array.

When we arrived, we made a sort of family camp with horse-lines, and began to walk about and meet people, and look at other horses. I still hadn't a care in life. Then, suddenly, it all began to happen.

"I say, Daddy," said Petronella, "there's an 'Old Die-Hards' Race this year. We forgot all about it. We simply must enter old Tubby. It'll be a riot."

I asked questions, and found out that every five years they have a long slow sort of consolation race for horses and riders, known to the local hunts, who haven't won a prize or a place for five years.

"By Gosh!" said Cousin Freddie. "Of course we must enter Tubby, and Sara must ride him. The rest of us have all won too many prizes."

"But I'm not known to the local hunt," I pleaded, my hopes rising slightly.

"That's all right," (*Continued on page 74*)

said Cousin Freddie, and Petronella, and all the family together. "We'll fix it."

And though Cousin Freddie is the most kindly and fatherly of men, he simply would not hear of my backing out.

I was petrified : still more so when I began to discover some of the other horses who were going to take part in this Old Die-Hards Race. There was a very large lanky dun who galloped and leapt like a wild thing. There was a neat little grey who seemed a particularly good jumper. There was an old bay who I was told in his time had won steeplechases all round the country—and had actually run in the Grand National.

Believe me, dear parents, I felt perfectly sick. Tubby and I were the only comic couple in the race.

"Don't fuss, me dear," said Cousin Freddie. "None of these horses will get far—I know 'em. That great big dun always refuses at the fourth or fifth jump, and stands waving his forelegs in the air. The little grey brushes when he's tired and tries to go fast. That's to say he knocks one foreleg against the other and goes down on his nose. As for the old bay, he'll go round once and then stop."

"But, Cousin Freddie . . ." I wept.

"Don't fuss, Sara," he said. "Buck up. Tubby's as steady as a rock. You'll be all right ! So now shut up !"

In the course of the afternoon the family collected a second, a third, and a sprained shoulder, which they seemed to regard as a very moderate performance. Geraldine got the second in the bending. She was furious about it. Lambert got the sprained shoulder, and I think he was lucky it wasn't a broken neck. Petronella won the third prize and I was delighted. Geraldine said, rather nastily : "Oh, Petro and Crackerjack are always coming in third in some obscure race or other." Miaow !

The Die-Hards race came last of all, and we formed ourselves into a sort of loose line ready for the start. At this point Tubby suddenly decided it all counted as going through a gate, and he kicked the horse next to him in the chest. For a moment I had a wild hope that he might be disqualified, but instead it was decided to penalize him by making him start behind the rest. Whereupon Cousin Freddie held him till the others got away.

"Good Heavens," I thought, "did a famous woman steeplechase rider ever start a race like this before?"

Then off we went. Tubby opened with a slow walk. After much heel-digging I persuaded him to trot. Everybody laughed. My chief wish was to leap off his back and run away shrieking. However, as we came to the first low hedge, I found one horse was already refusing. Dear Tubby cantered gently through it, and I was no longer last. Now I could see the big dun and the old bay galloping in the lead, a field ahead already.

At the next jump a horse fell. I saw him get up and canter about the country with his rider running after him. I began to feel a little better, especially as we were now well away from the spectators. I followed my usual plan of letting Tubby do everything, and he was now lolloping along at a steady canter. Coming down a steep bank, I nearly fell off, and hugged his neck. He obligingly put up his head, and I wriggled back into place.

A friendly countryman shouted, "Stick to him darling, now ; he'll get you there."

"Press on, Tubby," I said.

We passed another horse who had fallen and broken his girth. Then coming up to the very last hedge before we passed the crowd again, I found the big dun standing on his hind legs sending semaphores with his forelegs, just as Cousin Freddie had foretold : his rider was cursing loudly and whacking him on the head with his crop. Tubby crunched gently through the fence beside him, and I began to feel superiority. I could practically see the smug expression oozing from Tubby's ears.

Now we were on the long flat stretch that went past the people. Suddenly Tubby decided to loose off one of his startling gallops. Away he went like a thing demented, and we came roaring by the crowd amid the cheers and laughter of the family. At this point, as I learned later, the old bay racer had given up, also just as Cousin Freddie had foretold ; feeling he no longer had the dun to gallop beside him, he had gently and firmly turned off the course and returned to his headquarters ; and that was the end of him.

We left the crowd again, and turned off down the hill. Tubby, wise and careful, went slowly again. However his prolonged gallop had brought him in touch with the stragglers. Just in front was the little grey who had to be ridden carefully for fear of crossing his legs.

Over a hedge soared the grey like a bird, and straight through it, like earth-bound reptiles, came Tubby and I. Once again the steep bank nearly did for me. Tubby repeated his neck trick. Another horse refused. Another rider fell off.

"Come on," I thought. "We're positively going to finish." Tubby was now going well. His long strong wind was doing fine. The little grey in front had to speed up to keep away from us : just in front of the grey was a boy of fourteen on an elderly pony.

Suddenly I found that Petronella had cut across the fields on her Crackerjack and was going along beside me.

"Sara !" she screamed, "you're riding third ! Everyone else has fallen or refused !"

I nodded.

"But you must keep the old swine moving. People are remounting and coming along."

Now amazing things began to happen. At the next fence, which was the last but one, the boy on the pony came to grief. The grey pecked badly on landing. His rider checked him carefully and slowed him. Tubby and I came on behind. Then wonderful Tubby decided to gallop again. He hurled himself across the field, while the grey was still recovering, and for a few delirious moments we were in the lead.

I heard the grey coming up, and he passed us, galloping hard ; but it was just what he should not have done. He was tired and blown, and as we approached the last fence of all he crossed his legs, hurled his rider into the fence and himself after him ; while darling Tubby, with your daughter loosely attached, actually gave quite a passable jump.

We were over. However, all this was really a bit too much for Tubby. He stumbled on landing and went down on his nose. I slid up his neck, and for a moment touched earth with one hand. But Tubby recovered his feet, held up his angel neck, and I was saved. I slid back with the saddle.

Now, would you *believe* it, Tubby walked. I kicked and shouted. He just walked along, breathing heavily.

The family yelled at me from the ropes.

"Sara ! Kick the swine ! Put a pin in him ! Make him go ! Fool !"

Needless to say I'd dropped my whip at the last fence.

Looking round, I saw the horrible little boy of fourteen had caught his pony and was up again. Another horse was just behind him.

We went on at our majestic pace. A burst of cheering told me the other two horses had cleared the last hedge. I heard them galloping.

"Tubby, you swine !" I shrieked. "Oh, Tubby—please !"

The other horses rushed by. Then all the family were clustering round congratulating me. Believe it or not, we had won : won in a walk : won by a neck.

And as Mr. Churchill said, "Some Neck !"

Now my bad dream had passed into a kind of gay delirium. Hundreds of people congratulated me. Never before, it seems, has there been such an excruciatingly funny die-hards race. I was given champagne. So was Tubby. He also drank about half a bucket of beer, and went up to receive his prize with myself and three children on his back, rolling his eyes and making faces. I claim he was drunk.

We all trotted back in a high state of hilarity. But Tubby still had a trick up his sleeve. When we were coming up the drive and approaching the house, I saw old Dagmar standing on the steps ready to greet us. They let me lead the way on Tubby, and I went up to her absolutely stuffed with pride. That swine Tubby insisted on taking me along a little grass edging that's absolutely sacred from horses' hooves. Having done that, he suddenly gave a buck just as we stopped, a thing I've never known him do before. Of course I fell off into the flower bed. Everyone



hooted except old Norn, who said :

"My God, Sara ; my best fuchsia."

Well, goodbye, darling parents. I'll be home on Saturday. Yours ever,

SARA.

P.S. If you see that silly young man of mine around, tell him I've won a steeplechase. Just that. He thinks he can ride.

END

# Compliments Of The Season

(*Continued from page 55*)

CAREER GIRL FRIEND . . . Bronnley's Blossoms and Dew bath cubes in novelty cigarette box pack, 5s. 9d. ; Cyclax Gay Chiffon skin perfume snowball, 20s. 6d. ; Max Factor's "Magic Wand" containing Electrique parfum cologne and talc, 7s. 9d. ; Chanel No. 5 from £1 5s. to £7 12s. 6d. ; Helena Rubinstein's Noa Noa handbag perfumette, 21s. ; Fath de Fath, miniature size, 29s. ; Coty's L'Origan perfume sachet, 5s. ; Halex make-up mirror, 8s. 6d. ; Yardley Beauty Case, 7½ gns.

MOTHER OF TWINS . . . Helena Rubinstein's personalized beauty treatment gift set, for normal skin 21s. 9d., for dry skin 28s. 6d., for oily skin 28s. 6d. ; beauty treatment voucher from Gala ; Max Factor's Creme Puff and lipstick, 12s. 2d. ; Goya's Him and Her coffret, 12s. 6d. ; Patou's perfume, "Moment Supreme" or "Amour Amour," from 27s. ; 4711 wicker case gift box, 5 gns. ; Potter and Moore's "Carefree" perfume, 4s. 6d. ; Goya's Pink Mimosa perfume, 3s. 3d.

TEENAGER . . . Steiner's Starmist spray-on hair colour, 5s. 3d., 11s. 3d. ; Everything's Rosy nail colour and matching lipstick by Revlon, 10s. 6d., special Christmas pack, 12s. 6d. ; gift voucher for a hair style by French of London himself, 3 gns. ; Helena Rubinstein's Young Beauty gift set, 31s. 6d. ; Gala's Lipstick Wardrobe, 14s. ; Potter and Moore's novelty gondola filled with lavender perfume, 5s. 6d. ; gilt bracelet compact from Wm. Whiteley, 32s. 6d. ; Halex make-up tray, 12s. 6d.

SCHOOLGIRL . . . Yardley's bath dusting powder in April Violets, 11s. 10d. ; Elizabeth Arden's Blue Grass Puff-Puff double size dusting powder, 12s. 9d. ; Cusson's Lilac Blossom soap in gift box, 4s. ; Dubarry's bubble bath, 3s. 9d. ; Lentheric's bubbling bath oil, 7s. 6d. ; Mason Pearson's hair brush from 13s. 10d. to 52s. 6d. ; Cutex vanity set, 19s. 6d. ; Mr. Wu, Cusson's toilet soap peke, 3s. 6d.

THE OLDER WOMAN . . . Steiner's Mink perfume in de luxe pack, 6 gns., Mink purser pack, 15s. 6d. ; Kigu compact inlaid with mother of pearl, 67s. 6d. from Selfridges ; jewelled duet lipstick by Elizabeth Arden, 27s. 6d. ; Elizabeth Arden's hand lotion ribboned with June Geranium soap, 10s. 3d. ; Revlon's Snow Pink Frosted nail enamel, 7s. 3d. ; Gala's beauty treatment voucher, 15s.

END

# Finish With A Flourish

(*Continued from page 29*)

square or rectangular cake illustrated on page 28. One, quite simply iced, is tied with a red ribbon bow like a parcel. The other is a little house. Chocolate-drops make tiles, an ice-cream cone the turret. Windows and doors are outlined with piped icing.

In the realm of the sweet jelly or savoury aspic, there are moulds obtainable in the shape of fishes (for prawn aspics, etc.) baskets of fruit (for trifles and jellies), rings and stars besides the traditional fluted moulds.

The art of garnishing lies in using the decorative potential of the food itself. Anchovy fillets rolled round stuffed olives for canapes, the concentric yellow and white rings of sliced hardboiled egg, wedges of orange or lemon given a picot edging, all look as attractive as they taste. And the icing-gun can be used as effectively with savoury butters as with royal icing. This is the time to finish a really rich dish with a flourish.

END

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# Wine, Women And Guests (*Continued from page 45*)

The white is on the dry side, but acceptable to a sweet palate, and the red is rich and full, but not too sweet for the habitual spirit drinker to enjoy.

If, in the French manner, the cheese follows the turkey, you can finish off the red wine very well with gorgonzola or Gruyère.

But, whenever the sweet is served, as it is a Christmas party try to afford a bottle of champagne which is best drunk at this stage of the meal. One bottle will give a good glass to six people. An excellent non-vintage champagne is Ernest Irrly at 26s. 6d. a bottle. In fact, you will not better it in the non-vintage field, and it is not too dry. Incidentally, the only difference between a vintage and a non-vintage champagne is that the former is the wine of a particular harvest, and the latter is a blend of two or more years.

With coffee, a liqueur brandy suits all palates, but, if you prefer it, you can substitute a good port. An Armagnac brandy is a good variation from ordinary cognac and a good one can be got for 43s. a bottle.

On a similar price level, but offering alternatives throughout I would still start with sherry or white Cinzano, but make the following suggestions thereafter.

With the hors d'œuvres, or entrée, a choice of a good Entre Deux Mers (these vary considerably, but Messrs. Dolamore have a particularly good one at 8s. 6d. a bottle) or a Cabernet Rosé from Anjou. One has to be a little cautious over rosé wines as many of them are thin and vinegary, but the Cabernet Rosé of Ackermann Laurance at 9s. 6d. is a pleasant one, dry but not tasteless.

With the bird either a Beaujolais (and get one not older in vintage than 1952) which should be available at about 9s., or, for those who prefer something lighter and dryer, a 1947 Château Leoville Las-Cases, which will cost you 11s. 6d. Again, if possible, champagne with the sweet, and then a choice of cognac and a liqueur—ladies like cherry brandy which is comparatively inexpensive. There is one by a good maker at 31s. Better still, but dearer, is Cointreau. A half-bottle costs 23s. 6d.

It is fun to plan a feast for one's friends, so let us imagine we can raise the necessary funds to do them really proud. In that case I would not add to the pre-dinner choice (unless to add a dry Madeira) but would splash on the wines with the meal.

As these would be first-class I would assume my guests were of a character to enjoy them and I would not offer a choice. With the first course I would give them a 1947 Chablis—if possible one from the Blanchots, Les Clos, La Moutonne or Valmur crus. With the turkey I would serve a Château Rothschild of 1947, if I could get it, or alternatively a Château Lafite 1929, 1934, 1945 or 1947. This is a lighter wine than the Mouton-Rothschild, but equally delicious. If a heavier wine is preferred, try a Pommard 1945 or a Chambertin 1937.

In the case of the Pommard try and get one from the vineyards of Les Epenots or Les Petits Epenots.

I would serve the cheese before the sweet, and have a cold bottle of Moët et Chandon 1945—a glorious champagne—with the sweet.

There is, I think, no better brandy than Hennessy's XO (although it costs £3 5s. a bottle) and I would offer this with the coffee. Here only would I give the ladies a choice. They could have a Grand Marnier.

If you can, chill all the white wines in the refrigerator. Put them there in the morning. At the same time uncork the red wines (not the white) and stand them in the room in which you intend to dine. If you are lunching as opposed to dining, put the white wines in the refrigerator the previous night and open the reds at breakfast time.

Finally if you really must please a rich aunt with a hankering for sparkling burgundy you can do so at less cost if you purchase a bottle of Freisa, a semi-sparkling sweet Italian red wine which is only 6s. 6d. a bottle and should satisfy her just as well.

END

(Wines in the colour picture on page 44 were supplied by Saccone and Speed; Vermouth by Martini; Christmas decorations, candles, candlesticks and wine basket from Heals; Grosvenor filter tipped cigarettes by Ardath; chocolates: Cadbury's Vogue and Lindt; South African fruit; wallpaper background "Carnival" by Crown Wallpaper.)

# Highway To Heartbreak (*Continued from page 38*)

days Susan was happy. She left the house after Jim did, and returned to it before him, she enjoyed the work in the big, quiet, book-filled rooms, and she enjoyed looking forward to the substantial cheque which Eustace Watkins would give her at the end of the week.

It was in the middle of the afternoon, her fourth in the sunny mote-filled attic, where the familiar smell of books in old bindings rose pleasantly to her nostrils, that Susan leaped suddenly to her feet and looked about her as wildly as a trapped animal. Mr. Watkins's voice, loud and authoritative, was preceding him up the stairs, and with it came another voice, dearly familiar and horribly unwelcome.

There was nowhere to hide. In the end she was standing quite still, a dusty smear across one flushed cheek, when the door opened and Eustace Watkins walked in with Jim behind him.

"Ah!" her employer said. "Mrs. Barnes, this is. . . ." He stopped, obviously struck by the name, and Susan said, weakly:

"Hallo, Jim."

"Ah!" Eustace Watkins said again, "you *do* know each other!"

"My wife," Jim said grimly, and added: "of course!"

"You didn't tell me——" Eustace began, and Jim, disregarding the frantic appeal in Susan's dark eyes, interrupted him:

"She didn't tell me either." Then he turned his back on Susan, and said:

"Now sir, what was it you wanted my advice about?"

The two men talked about Eustace's books for some time, taking no notice of Susan at all.

They went away at last, and Susan sat down at the big table she was using as a desk and felt shakily in her bag for a cigarette. It was obvious that Jim was furious; not only at her deception, but at being made to look foolish by the surprise of seeing her there.

On a sudden inspiration she reached for the telephone. She would call Perry Edwards. He had got her into this, and he must get her out of it. Perhaps if they said it was a favour to Cousin Royden, or a friend of Cousin Royden's? But that wouldn't do, either, because Jim had a peculiar kind of hate for Cousin Royden and his oversized extravagent coffee-table. As she put the telephone back again into its cradle, the door opened behind her, and she said at once and all in one breath:

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Watkins, that must have been rather embarrassing for you. It's because my husband is rather. . . ." By that time she had turned round and her voice petered out into a little gasp.

"Go on," Jim said, closing the door behind him. "I should like to hear what your husband is!"

"Unreasonable!" Susan flashed at him.

"I see. May I ask if you were going to confide in that good-looking tycoon, and. . . ." Jim stopped short, a peculiar look on his face.

"Tycoon . . ." he repeated softly. "Susan, I suppose it isn't possible—there couldn't be anything. . . . How long have you known this Watkins?"

Susan had turned quite white and her chin was lifted in a way that was reminiscent of Aunt Emily Rose.

"Why don't you ask him?" she said coldly. "I doubt if you'd believe me anyway."

"I doubt it, too," Jim said, pain and anger in his voice. "I had no idea you could be such a horrid little liar, Susan."

The door was almost closed before she found enough voice to shout after him: "And I didn't know you could be so pompous and silly!"

She was too angry, too hurt and outraged, to cry, but she gave a little sob and grabbing one of the books on the table, she flung it with all her strength at the door which had been safely closed only a split second before. It was one more horror of that horrible afternoon that the book caught Eustace Watkins square in the face, knocking off his glasses, and then split down the spine and fell in two halves at his feet.

He gave a cry of pure anguish and stood stock still, his hands groping helplessly in front of him.

"Pick it up!" he commanded in a shaking voice. "Idiot of a girl, pick it up, and find my glasses, too. I'm afraid to move in case I step on them."

Susan, flushed and very near to tears, did as he told her, and he put on his glasses and took the two halves of the book from her. He examined them carefully, and only after he had done that, he raised his eyes and gave Susan a long look of withering contempt.

"And you," he said, "were once employed in the rare book department of the Hayward Museum!"

"I wish I were there now!" Susan cried hysterically and Eustace Watkins said earnestly:

"So do I. I do indeed. By the way, your husband asked me to tell you that he won't be home for dinner."

"That," Susan said, dabbing at her eyes, "makes two of us. I'm not going home either."

"You seem to be an extraordinarily troublesome young woman," her employer said curiously. "Why did Perry Edwards send you to me?"

"It was because of Cousin Royden," Susan said, and took an angry pleasure in the bewilderment on his face. "I'm going now," she added, and Eustace Watkins said politely:

"Please do. And you won't come back, will you?"

"Never!" Susan cried with unnecessary drama.

She spent an hour at a movie, sitting in front of a wide screen filled with giant figures in three dimensions, and seeing none of it.

She was filled with self-pity and anger. Jim hadn't given her time to say that she was sorry for having deceived him, before he had made that preposterous remark about Eustace Watkins, which obviously harked back to that silly conversation they had had about divorces and about her marrying a tycoon.

And now, Susan thought miserably, while the most stirring scenes went on in front and half-way around her, now he wants to push me on to silly Eustace, while he looks round for a rich female chartered accountant. Oh, it isn't *fair*!

But, of course, that wasn't true; Jim didn't want riches, and even less did he want what he had got, the *appearance* of riches, and neither did she, so what in the world, Susan thought amazed, reaching this conclusion just as there was a great burst of gun-fire on the screen, what in the world was there to quarrel about?

She was out of her seat and streaking up the aisle at such a rate that an usher rushed up to find out what was the matter. She got her car out of the park, and was back in Stratton Drive and running up the steps to her own front door in record time.

The house was extravagantly lighted, music poured softly through the open door of the living-room and there was the clink of ice in glasses from the pantry.

A woman was sitting on the sofa, her (*Continued on page 78*)

*In a gin and it's*

*better drink*

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Two-thirds Martini Sweet
One-third Gin.
Shake or stir well with ice.
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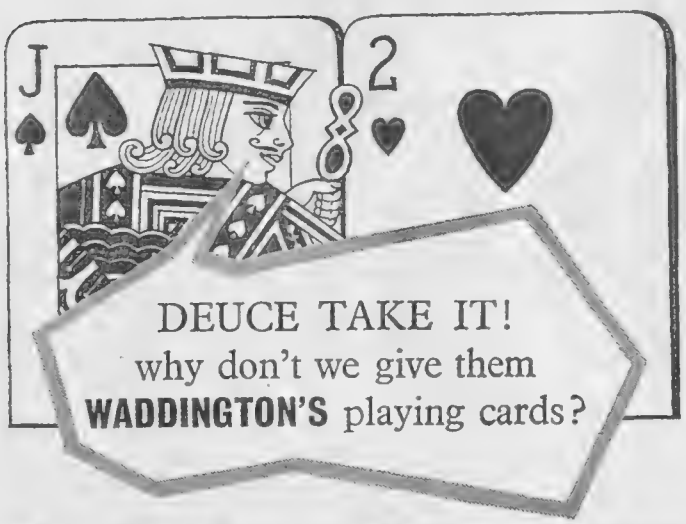
What did the knave say to the two of hearts?

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back to the door, her feet propped on one of Susan's best cushions.

"Good evening," Susan said icily, "please don't move," and Aunt Emily Rose gave a squeak of delight and whirled round.

"Susan! My darling child, where on earth have you been?"

"Working late," Susan said brazenly. "Aunt Emily Rose, you gave me an awful shock, I thought you were a rich girl friend of Jim's!"

"Why rich?" Aunt Emily Rose asked idly and ran on before Susan could answer:

"My dear, your Aunt Lily Jane wants to go to Haiti—I can't think why, at her age, and so I'm going with her. I dropped in to say goodbye on the way through."

"I'm so glad you did," Susan said warmly. Jim came in with a tray of glasses and gave her a brief, questioning glance. He seemed surprised when she smiled at him, and waited until he had put the tray safely down before she went on: "I wanted to see you—I wanted to tell you I'm going to have a baby."

Jim's startled exclamation was lost in Aunt Emily Rose's cries of rapture.

"Darling child!" Aunt Emily Rose cried enthusiastically, "how wonderful! Will this little house be big enough? Had we better find you something larger *at once*? I think we must get you one of those adorable English nannies. Aunt Lily Jane will be *so* pleased. Naturally, we shall furnish the nursery for you, pink *and* blue, I think."

There was a tiny pause during which Susan was sure that Jim was holding his breath and then she said clearly:

"If you don't mind, Aunt Emily Rose, Jim and I want to do this by ourselves. No, please," above her aunt's pouted protests, "you and Aunt Lily Jane can knit for me and Uncle Al can buy a rattle for the baby, but that's all. This house will be quite big enough, especially when we've sold some of the furniture."

Jim gave an audible sigh and Aunt Emily Rose laughed and gave her niece a knowing look.

"Sell what you like, my pet," she said, "*we* shan't mind. I'm surprised you haven't done it before. And now I must fly."

She kissed them both warmly, winked at Susan, gave Jim a flirtatious leer and departed in a jangle of silver bracelets and a strong wave of Chanel. When the door had closed, Jim said urgently:

"Susan—is it true?"

"Well, not absolutely," Susan dimpled at him, "not yet, that is. But it soon will be, won't it?"

"What a shocking little liar you are!" Jim said as he held out his arms for her to run into them.

"That was a narrow escape," Susan murmured against his throat, but when he asked her what she was mumbling about, she said she was only saying how much she loved him.

Which was very nearly true.

END

# As Others See It!

(*Continued from page 41*)

*your own Christmas entertainment? We demanded this of a couple with three children.*

SHE: Oh! the second-hand bonhomie of those radio parties. I do so resent the implication that we can't entertain ourselves. The professional cheerfulness of paid performers is depressing to me at Christmas. Are we so regimented and mechanized that we can't even play without assistance?

HE: I'm not so sure. Your point of view would have been all right fifty years ago. They had large families then. Large houses to play in. Picture us playing charades in *this* flat. Where can we kick up our heels here and who can sing round the piano when there is no piano and nobody who could play it if there were one? Deplorable it may be, but let's face it, many people just don't know how to whip up a party of their own, so let them enjoy the radio. The point is to *enjoy* yourself. What does it matter which way you do it, so long as you do?

END

# Guys And Dolls

(*Continued from page 32*

or organdie for the blouse, sewing on red sequins. Make a tea cosy in felt, leaving an opening at the top to insert the doll's body. Four lengths of wire 6 in. long, twisted together for 2 in. and inserted in the body, with the remainder spread out and attached to the tea-cosy seams will hold it firmly. Use the brightest checked gingham or taffeta you can find for the skirt, which can be a complete circle or a straight piece gathered round the waist, and make the turban to match.

The blouse for all three dolls is similar, except in the case of the Spanish and Mexican dolls you add deep frills over the elbows and ribbons or frills round the neckline. Dress the Spanish gipsy in very bright colours, a vivid red or pink, in taffeta, satin or poplin. Edge each frill with two narrow ribbons or braids, blue and yellow ribbon on a red skirt, orange and black on pink. The shawl should be made from fine striped or checked material edged with a deep black fringe. Black lace or satin heavily embroidered is also suitable. Make two roses for the hair from small pieces of felt.

The Mexican doll wears a full gathered skirt with a deep hem frill. It would look very rich in mauve velvet with a frill of transparent, spotted net or muslin. Above the frill sew several rows of different-coloured ribbons or gilt braids. The headdress is made from white lace, eyelet embroidery or embroidered organdie or muslin. A 2-in. frill is pleated or gathered on to a small cap, the frill falling mantilla fashion rather longer at the back.

END

# *The man who discovered what to give for Christmas*

There was a man who had a daughter. And he thought that no-one else had a daughter half so kind and clever and lovely. And he wanted to give her a present that would make her eyes shine.

He puzzled for weeks. And suddenly he knew.

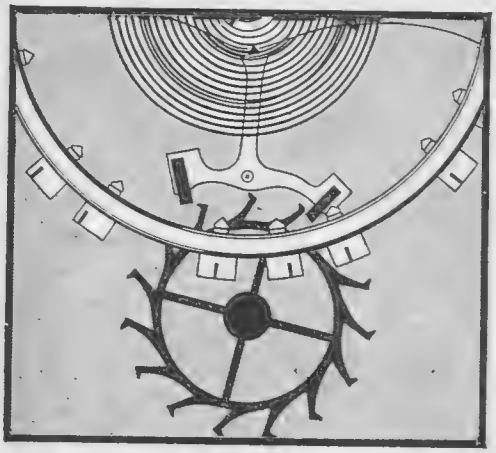
A beautiful watch would be exciting, her first jewellery, something she could be vain about.

A reliable and lasting watch would be something she could use a hundred times a day, every day, for many years.

A trustworthy jeweller showed him that good Swiss *jewelled-lever* watches, made by the world's best craftsmen, are watches like that.

So she became a very proud daughter.*

** The Swiss make men's watches just as carefully as women's.*



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*432,000 times a day these two lever-hammers strike the escape-wheel teeth. Only if there's a jewel on the head of each can the hammers resist wear many years on end. For lasting accuracy, jewels elsewhere are useful, two jewels here are essential.*

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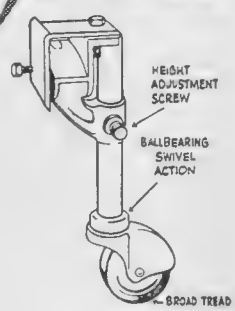


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# Christmas Reading

(*Continued from page* 39)

quite content. Then in a moment it was all changed. There was Gracie. Gracie to talk to. Gracie to laugh with. Gracie to ask questions, to make plans for the future." Mr. Winn gets the human stories from everyone he meets. They make friendly, intimate reading, with insight into both ordinary and unusual lives, in **"The Queen's Countrywomen"** (Hutchinson, 15s.).

Farming, taming horses in the Argentine, Barbara Woodhouse has developed a gentle technique with animals which enables her almost to converse with them and exclude all mutual fear. She explains it in **"Talking To Animals"** (Faber, 15s.).

One for friends abroad or anyone visiting this country is Charles Duff's **"England And The English"** (Boardman, 18s.), a helpful introduction to English character, its growth through history, with an informative tour of London and the shires. There are small oversights : the Piccadilly flowergirls no longer sit under Eros, St. James's Park has a lake, not "ponds"; but, all-round, this is a good background book for any student of English life and scene.

Part of the English heritage are the mansions, manors, cottages, grammar schools, inns and other survivals that Raymond Francis describes in **"Looking For Elizabethan England"** (Macdonald, 18s.), with much interesting lore about their historic owners and the customs of the time, and ninety-seven photographs.

Fat novels are specially favoured at Xmas because they *look* something and promise weeks of absorbed reading. Taylor Caldwell's **"Never Victorious, Never Defeated"** (Collins, 15s., 640 pages) introduces us to masterful Cornelia Marshall who, at seventy, could ride, drive, sail, swim, bang tennis and golf balls like one half her age, tell ribald stories and outdrink most men. The occasion is the centenary of the U.S. Interstate railroad, and we then get a cutback to the loves, hates, rivalries of the families linked with the line's history, in which she has played a dominating part.

U.S. novelists are quick to scoop themes from real life. News of two rich old brothers found in a New York house stacked with junk, fourteen pianos and booby traps—one caught in a trap and dying, with rats nibbling at him—launched Marcia Davenport on **"My Brother's Keeper"** (Collins, 15s., 500 pages). How did they come to that pass, what part had a villainous grandmother in warping their lives in childhood? A fascinating enigma dramatically explored.

Straight from life, too, is Phyllis Gordon Demarest's **"The Naked Risk"** (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d., 400 pages), based on a New York triangle love and murder drama which provoked fierce controversy at the time of the Civil War. Abby McFarland, wife of a drunken, sadistic Irish speculator, ran off—platonically—to a *Tribune* warco. The husband shot him but went free, the courageous wife suffered.

Continuing Martha Quest's story in **"A Proper Marriage"** (Michael Joseph, 12s. 6d., 438 pages) Doris Lessing gives her a raw deal in wartime South Africa. Married at nineteen to a tough Civil Service type who becomes self-pitying and pathologically jealous after a disillusioning year in the army, she breaks with him, her little daughter, and her social set to win freedom at any price.

"Save for the set of her head, the carriage of the thin shoulders with their promise of beauty," writes Hilda Lewis of the young Catharine of Valois, "you might have wondered what slut walked in the royal gardens dressed in cast-offs descended from her betters. . . ." It typifies her lively approach to **"Wife To Henry V"** (Jarrolds, 12s. 6d., 416 pages), the story of Catharine's climb to court and her love for Owen Tudor, the handsome Welshman who fought for Henry at Agincourt, was offered a knighthood, and joined the royal household. There's nothing stilted in Miss Lewis's style, which should please anyone partial to "historicals."

For an adventure thriller packed with action : Dennis Wheatley's **"The Island Where Time Stands Still"** (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d., 330 large pages). Gregory Sallust weaves through a fantastic tangle of slit-eyed intrigue and murder in China, with an ingenious killing device to top off the story. Wheatley's invention is prodigious.

D. E. Stevenson's **"Charlotte Fairlie"** (Collins, 12s. 6d.) considers being a headmistress of a girls' school lonelier than lighthouse-keeping. But she isn't so lonely when pupil Tessa—quite a little matchmaker—invites her to her home in the Western Isles where her father, Col. Mac-Rhynne, soon finds occasion to tell Charlotte : "Love isn't warmth and cosiness ; it's fire and glory."

Lastly, a gift for tired and tough tycoons who have to fight at board meetings to keep their end up against rivals both inside and out : Roderick Milton's **"Stand Away, Stranger"** (Constable, 12s. 6d.). The battling here is over Jansen's Jets when it isn't over the women tycoons dream about while doodling on their blotting pads. And what is a tycoon? "A dyspeptic person speaking into four telephones simultaneously," says one in this brusque and breezy tale who would prefer to be called a *merchant prince.*

Fiction for holiday reading :

**"Louise And Other Stories,"** by Viola Meynell (James Barrie, 10s. 6d.). **"The Newel Post,"** by Rachel Ann Fish (Evans, 12s. 6d.). **"Brotherly Love,"** by Gabriel Fielding (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.). **"Pictures From An Institution,"** by Randall Jarrell (Faber, 12s. 6d.). **"Antonia,"** by Naomi Jacob (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d.). **"Lord Of The Flies,"** by William Golding (Faber, 12s. 6d.). **"A Seal's World,"** by Frank Stuart (Harrap, 12s. 6d.). **"The Iron Maiden,"** by Edwin Lanham (Macmillan, 15s.). **"This Is Sylvia,"** by Sandy Wilson (Parrish, 8s. 6d.). **"Yew Hall,"** by Lucy M. Boston (Faber, 10s. 6d.).

Non-fiction :

**"Sell Them A Story,"** by Jean Leroy (Constable, 7s. 6d.). **"Cortes And Montezuma,"** by Maurice Collis (Faber, 15s.). **"A History Of Courting,"** by E. S. Turner (*Continued on page* 82)

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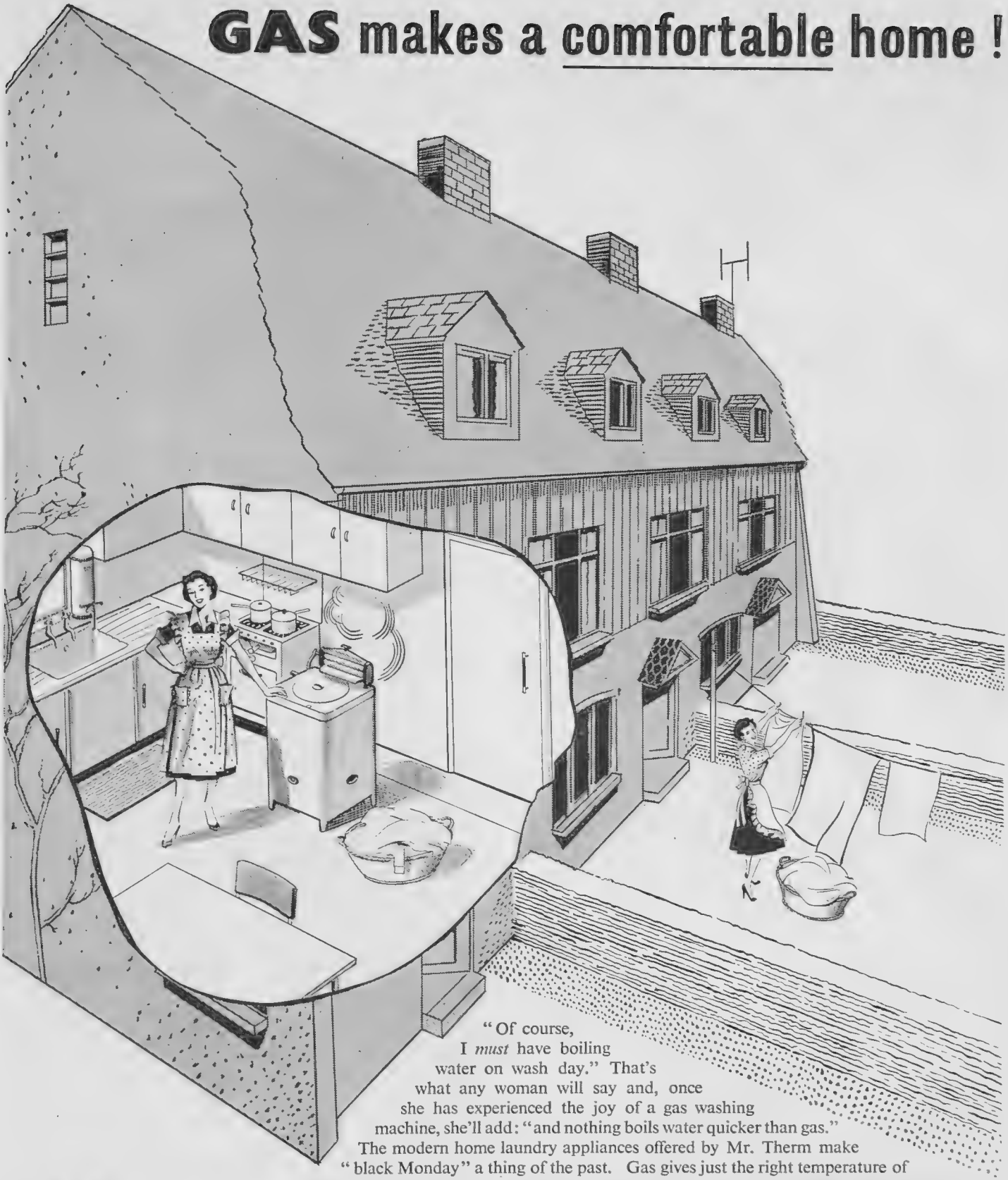

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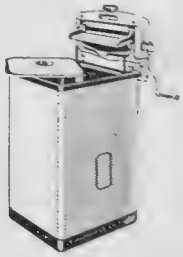

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And to entertain the children :

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END

# People On My Mantelpiece

(*Continued from page* 42)

even a breath of criticism? It might be but for the fact that the delightful custom of card-sending offers such an opportunity to crystallize in a mere piece of pasteboard all the warmth, the generosity the abundance, all the gaiety and enchantment of Christmas.

Yet here is the coldly dignified printed card of the Blinkington-Smythes, impersonal as an ancient tombstone and about as warm. "I *do* think they might just have scribbled a line at the bottom—otherwise it's rather like a tradesman's circular. And, after all, we *do* call them Fred and Elsie. . . ."

Here, on the other hand, is the outsize, burgeoning sort of card that Aunt Mary always sends. None of your skimped little two-by-two scraps for her but a heart-warmingly generous affair whose very magnitude seems designed to match the boundless generosity of her goodwill and underline the "All my love to you both," beneath the stereotyped printed greeting.

"Look ! Here's that card from the Blanes with the photograph of them all in the new garden." (The Blanes moved to Scotland eighteen months ago.) "My goodness, how little Peter had shot up and he must be even bigger by now, of course. The change of air obviously suited Joan—she'd put on weight. . . . The garden looks much prettier than the one they had here. . . ."

And then we recall that the Bennetts, who live more or less round the corner, also sent us a photograph-card, with a picture of their front porch which, charming as it is, we see almost every other day. Or that the Heathcoats sent a card with a photograph of their small girl —quite adorable but still she *does* quite frequently come to play in our garden. Perhaps it's uncharitable of us to feel just a tiny bit as though Christmas is being used as a frame for their own egotism?

Then turning over the pile we unearth a rich, glowing thing, a thing to set the ears a-tingle with the sound of carols and the heart a-glow with the memory of every Christmas that ever was : a traditional thing compounded of holly and robins and timeless magic that even the triteness of the verse inside cannot quite dispel. "I suppose I'm old-fashioned but I do like a Christmas card to bear some relation to Christmas even if it *is* remote. Even that picture of St. Paul's Cathedral has a fairly clear connection but I'm dashed if I see the point of Van Gogh's 'Man With Red Hair'. . . ."

Then we come across an amusing contemporary card with a caricature of an English couple sitting under a rather rackety striped umbrella at a wrought iron table obviously in the South of France—as un-Christmassy as it could well be. "We can't part with that one from Helen." Illogical? But you see we'd bemoaned the fact to Helen that a long-saved-for holiday abroad had been cancelled by prosaic but essential repairs to the house. And we knew she'd taken special pains to find something peculiarly appropriate to us.

"And we must keep this one, of course." "This one," too, has nothing to do with Christmas. It's not very impressive to look at. It's probably not really very good: just a pretty little posy in two simple colours. But it was hand-painted by the sender and he would be churlish indeed who could despise so subtle a compliment.

"Funny how there's always a most popular card each year. Do you remember this one?" We dig out the card that, last year, arrived like the traditional silver-plated toast-racks at a wedding, in sixes. Not really funny, though, for we decide that the beautifully printed picture of the chubby, small boy singing, somewhat impatiently, "Oh, come *on* all ye faithful . . ." has everything a Christmas card should have : colour, tradition, humour. . . .

"Have you got Uncle George?"

"No, but I've got the Montgomerys—and we mustn't forget little Jeremy."

And in the end we shall have to run out (*Continued on page* 84)

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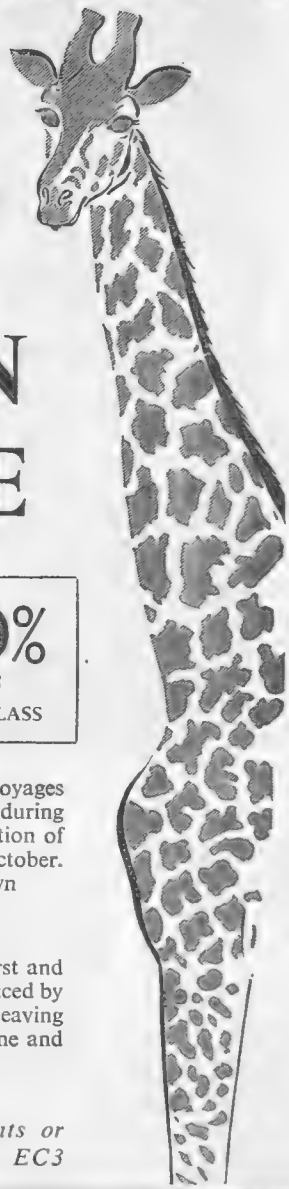

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on Christmas Eve and buy the last card left in the village shop for Admiral and Mrs. ffoulkes.

*We chose the Christmas cards for our illustration from the current selection by the Gordon Fraser Gallery, the Medici Gallery, Raphael Tuck, G. Delgado, Fine Arts Publishing Co., Royle Publications, Conrad's Fine Art Publishing Co., Fama, Ltd., Sharpe's Classic Cards, Raven Cards, and exclusive designs sold by Ascroft and Daw.*

END

# Festively Floral (*Continued from page* 35)

shiny leaves: laurel does admirably: and some bright scarlet berries or red painted beads. A reel of fine wire, fuse wire will do if you have nothing else, and a packet of "invisible hairpins." The diagrams on page 35 show step by step how the work is done.

First cover the hoop with moss, not too much, just enough to take the hairpins securely, and, as you cover, wind the fine wire over and over the padding—keeping the circular shape. When completely covered, leave a small loop of wire at the top for hanging. Start by placing the leaves one over the other, overlapping, and secure each with a hairpin as shown in the diagram on page 35. Continue round the circle in this way and at the centre bottom place an important looking chou of ribbon or leaves and hide the attachment with a large bunch of bright berries or glass balls. Pin more clusters of berries at intervals around the ring, and your decoration is complete.

The winter arrangement in the photograph on page 35 was designed to agree with the shining pewter jug, but any bright container of the same shape would do equally well. Make a good roll of chicken wire to fit inside the jug, find some branches of cupressus or pine, and let them be the most important part of the decoration; a few cones, berries and some shining evergreens, and the arrangement will have cost you little but your time.

Converge all stems to the centre of the wire in the container; put some at an angle and start with placing the big branches first, at the left side, and to the back.

END

# Bleak House (*Continued from page* 52)

Guppy, sensing mystery, cross-examined the boy, but could elicit nothing further—but before the afternoon was out had learnt one surprising thing—that the oily Mr. Chadband's wife had formerly been with Esther's godmother as housekeeper. Prompted by his new-found devotion to Esther, Guppy decided to probe the mystery further. He thought that Krook, the drunken old marine-store dealer, might hold the key to the dead man's life, and got his friend Tony Jobling installed as lodger in the law-writer's old room.

Snagsby, meanwhile, had passed on the boy's story to Mr. Tulkinghorn, who was now also employing a detective named Bucket to ferret out information for him. Jo was confronted in the lawyer's room with a woman—veiled and silent. She he identified as the woman who had given him the money—until she removed her glove, when Jo shook his head and told them that the hand that had given him the sovereign was a lady's hand. When the veiled woman spoke, the voice was different, too, as well it might be, for the woman Jo was meeting for the first time was actually Hortense, former maid to Lady Dedlock and dismissed for some trivial offence. . . .

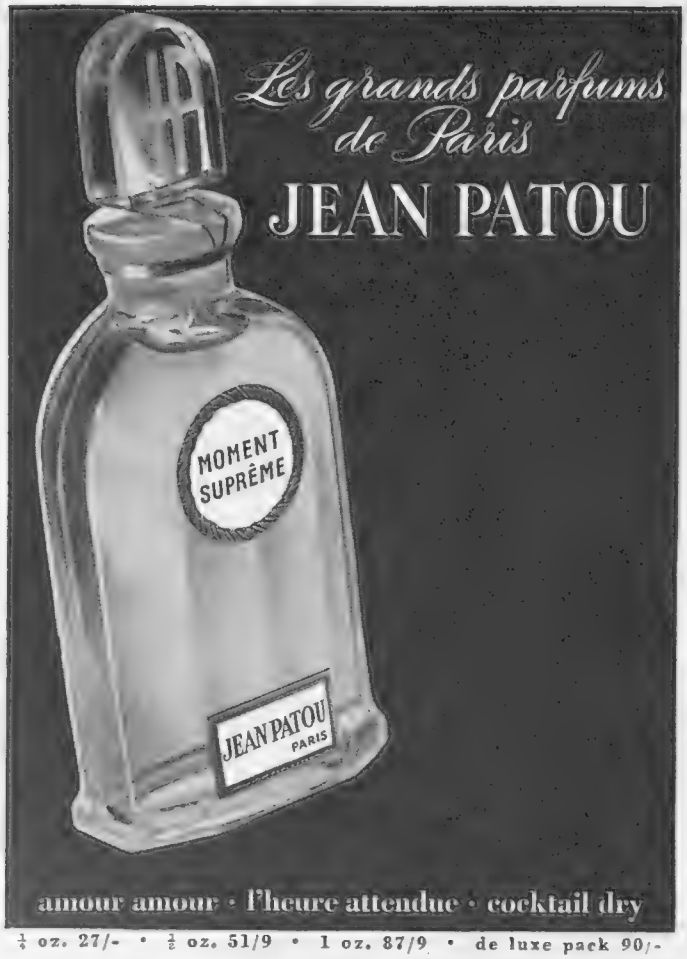
Rick now found that the law was too much for him and decided to enter the Army. And to Esther's personal delight, her friend Caddy's romance had developed, and Caddy and Prince, braving Mr. Turveydrop's affected despair, were soon to be married.

Rick, his Army career decided, spent much time fencing with an old soldier, George, who kept a shooting gallery in Leicester Square. George, actually the runaway son of the housekeeper at Chesney Wold, was in the hands of a money-lender—Grandfather Smallweed. Through a note in his possession from an Army officer long believed dead, George was eventually blackmailed into providing lawyer Tulkinghorn with the note. The handwriting, on comparison with the dead law-writer's hand, proved the latter to have been a Capt. Hawdon.

Meanwhile Guppy had ferreted out information to the effect that Esther's real name was Hawdon, not Summerson, which information he passed on to Lady Dedlock, who seemed stunned by the disclosure.

Now catastrophe came to Esther herself. It was smallpox—and when she finally recovered it was to find her face sadly disfigured. For long she could not bear others to see her face and would only talk to people through the window of her room while she herself was concealed by the curtain. But while she lay ill a lady with a veil kept inquiring after her health at the brickmaker's cottage near Bleak House and eventually, leaving money, took away Esther's handkerchief "as a keepsake."

Recuperating at the Boythorn home near Chesney Wold, Esther came face to face with Lady Dedlock and suddenly saw "a something in her face that I had pined for when I was a little child." Then Lady Dedlock sat down beside her and in her hand Esther saw her own handkerchief—the handkerchief with which she had covered the dead baby. And suddenly Lady Dedlock was on her knees crying, "Oh, my child, my child. I am your wicked and unhappy mother." She begged the girl to keep her secret from all except her guardian for she feared the lawyer Tulkinghorn. Then she gave Esther a letter in which she set forth the truth, which revealed that Esther was her daughter by her lover Capt. Hawdon. And that Lady Dedlock herself had thought until Guppy's (*Continued on page* 86)



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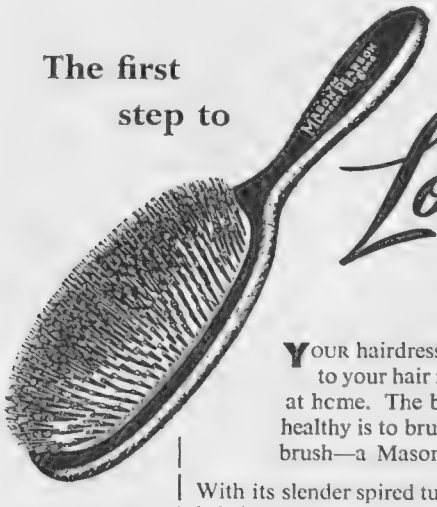

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disclosure that Esther had died at birth. . . .

Telling her guardian of Lady Dedlock's disclosures, Esther suddenly realized that she herself had been the unwitting cause of Laurence Boythorn never marrying. For it was Lady Dedlock's sister he had loved and she it was who in stern piety and shame for her sister, had withdrawn from the world to bring up the baby Esther. Now, too, Esther realized that her guardian was in love with her and in gratitude, and thinking that Allan Woodcourt would never look at her now with her disfigured face, she gave him the answer he sought. Almost at once disturbing news reached them—that Richard was leaving the Army. Shortly afterwards he came back to London, and there, one day, Esther found him with Ada. They had been secretly married.

Meanwhile Guppy had learnt from his friend Jobling that old Krook had a bundle of letters stolen from the portmanteau of the dead law-writer. Determined to get these while the old man was drunk, Guppy visited the Krook house. There, as they were about to search for the papers, they found, in a moment of horror, the old man, not drunk but dead. Krook was Mrs. Smallweed's brother and the old money-lender now took possession of the house. . . .

As Lady Dedlock had feared, Tulkinghorn had pieced together the evidence that Lady Dedlock was Esther's mother. Confronting her in London he told her that Sir Leicester must know the truth and that he himself would tell him. He left the house to return to his own chambers, while Lady Dedlock also left shortly afterwards. In the morning Tulkinghorn was found in his room shot dead. And the available evidence pointed to Lady Dedlock.

But Bucket, interviewing Sir Leicester, disclosed the secret of Lady Dedlock's past and then, as a conjurer might open his case of mirrors, flung open the door and ordered the former maid Hortense to be brought in. She he disclosed as the killer of old Tulkinghorn, wadding from the pistol that fired the fatal shot having been found to have been made of a printed piece of paper known to have been in the girl's possession. This and other clues pointed her guilt—the motive, a sudden hatred of Tulkinghorn because she deemed he had not paid her fairly for her impersonation of Lady Dedlock in front of Jo, and also her enmity towards Lady Dedlock herself.

Meanwhile, Guppy had visited Lady Dedlock and told her he thought that letters belonging to the dead Capt. Hawdon had fallen into Smallweed's possession and that the latter was even then visiting Sir Leicester with blackmail in his mind. Lady Dedlock,



aware that she might well be suspect of Tulkinghorn's death, and afraid to face Sir Leicester again now that, as she thought, he had her compromising letters in his possession, fled the house.

Sir Leicester collapsed when he learnt that she had gone, but telling Bucket he forgave her, implored the detective to find his wife. . . .

Now the chase was on, the search for Lady Dedlock, a desolate figure lost somewhere in the wintry night. Bucket, finding a handkerchief of Esther's in Lady Dedlock's room, picked up Esther, and together they set out on their quest for the missing woman.

From routine police inquiries they found that a woman answering to Lady Dedlock's description had passed along the road to St. Albans. There at the brickmaker's cottage where Lady Dedlock had found the handkerchief belonging to Esther, they learnt that she had gone on north—perhaps into Lincolnshire. But the trail petered out—and suddenly Bucket realized that they had been tricked. The woman they were now following was the brickmaker's wife, dressed in the clothes Lady Dedlock had been wearing: where was Lady Dedlock?

Back over the slush-soaked roads they came to London—and so at last after breathless, time-stealing inquiries, to the pauper's graveyard where Capt. Hawdon lay buried. And there, on the threshold, they found Lady Dedlock. . . . "I lifted the heavy head, put the long dark hair aside. . . . It was my mother, cold and dead. . . ."

Death, too, had come to poor Jo, outcast of the streets, though taken, too late, under Allan Woodcourt's care; and Rick, too. For suddenly the great suit was over; a new, undisputed will was found—and out of all the great fortune Rick and Ada might have inherited not one penny remained—the costs of the age-long suit had taken all.

Already sick, in mind and body, Rick could not face this new shock and ruin of all his hopes, and died in Ada's arms.

So the end of the story was come, except for one thing: Esther, bound by the promise she had made to her guardian, sorrowfully learnt at last that Allan Woodcourt was in love with her. . . . But, bravely she set off—to a new Bleak House John Jarndyce had built for her: a house planned and built to the last detail for Esther herself.

To Bleak House she came to share her life with her guardian as wife and husband—and there the wise, understanding man released her from her promise and left her on the threshold of a new life—with Allan Woodcourt.

END

# Help Yourself (*Continued from page* 60)

to the kitchen. Except, of course, for the coffee, which should be plentiful and hot.

Here are the recipes:

### Cold Fillet of Beef

A large lean wing rib of beef; aspic; lettuce; half-cups of tomatoes, filled with celery and apple salad.

Get your butcher to bone and roll the joint and roast in the usual way. When cold, remove skewers and string, slice the joint evenly, so that you can press the slices back into the original shape of the joint. Place on your serving dish, coat with aspic and chill thoroughly. Place a leaf of crisp lettuce under each tomato cup.

### Turkey Cream

½ lb. cold turkey; 4 ozs. ham; 2 ozs. cold stuffing; seasoning; 2 ozs. butter; 2 eggs; 2 cupfuls crumbs; cranberry sauce.

Mince the turkey and ham, then mix turkey, ham, breadcrumbs and stuffing together. Beat up the two eggs, and bind the mixture with it, seasoning well. Pour into a greased bowl, cover with greased paper, and steam for one hour. Turn on to a hot dish, and pour cranberry sauce over.

### Christmas Patties

¼ lb. minced turkey and ham; 2 ozs. chopped cooked mushrooms; seasoning; thick white sauce; flaky pastry; a little egg.

Make a stiff mixture with the white sauce and minced meats, then add the chopped mushrooms. Season well. Bake blind a number of little pastry cases, varying the shapes if you can, fill with the mixture and decorate with sprigs of parsley.

### Cherry Christmas Cake

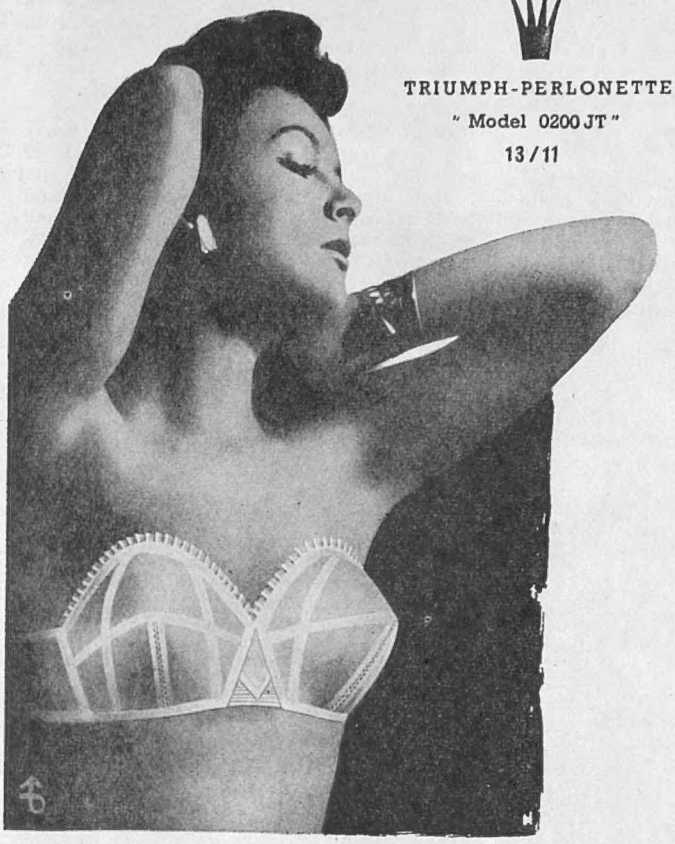
1 cup caster sugar; 6 ozs. butter or margarine; 4 eggs; 2 cups flour; ¼ teaspoon salt; 2 lb. currants; 6 ozs. glacé cherries; 3 ozs. mixed cut peel; ¼ teaspoon nutmeg; 2 tablespoons rum or brandy.

Cream butter and sugar together so that they are absolutely blended. Beat each egg in separately and thoroughly. Sift flour, add salt, then washed and dried fruits, stirring so that they are thoroughly coated with flour. Mix well into butter and egg mixture. Add spirit and stir well. Pour into a greased and floured tin, filling two-thirds only, and bake in a moderate oven (325 deg. F.) for two hours. The crust should be a warm straw colour. Make this cake a week before using, and keep in a cake-tin to mature.

A Merry Christmas to you all.

END

3



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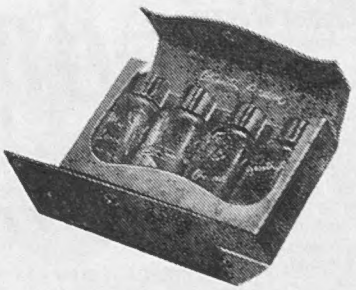

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# Two Against The Cold

(*Continued from page 57*)

**2nd row.**—P. to last 2 sts., slip them on neck-pin, and turning, k. back to end.

Rep. the last 2 rows, shaping 2 sts. less each time until 34 sts. remain.

Work the 12 rows, then shape shoulder as for first shoulder.

### NECK EDGING

Join shoulders by grafting, then using the 13 needles, pick up 1 st. into each from back opening to shoulder seam (= 18 sts.), then 16 (= 1 into each of the rows to shaping), then 10 over the shaping rows, then 17 at the front, 10 other side shaping, 16 over 16 rows to shoulder, then 19 at back (= 106 sts. in all).

Rib for 4 rows in white firmly.

Cast off in rib very loosely.

### SLEEVES

Using the finer needles, cast on 89 sts. and working as for the lower edge of the back, rib for 4 rows only.

Change to the larger needles, and patt. st., and inc. at each end of the 3rd, then every 4th row until 40 patt. rows completed (= 109 sts. on needle).

**Shape Top.**—Cast off 2 sts. at the beg. of every row until 21 sts. remain, cast off loosely.

Work another sleeve to pair.

### COLLAR

Knitted lengthways : cast on the larger needles, 40 sts., and work the patt. st. for 142 rows (= beg. and ending with pink), cast off loosely.

### SLEEVE BANDS

Make in exactly the same way only with 96 rows to complete as these join in round, and therefore end with 2 rows in white.

Make 2 cuffs likewise.

### TO MAKE UP

Join sides and sleeves. Set n sleeves. Join cuffs and attach to edges of ribbing on sleeves. Work around back opening 3 rows of d.c. to neaten and turn under, right over left, to take the fasteners. Secure at lower edge.

Join collar either end and press. Then pin in position from opening to opening on edge of ribbing and join. Turn over and secure ends at back.

Press well under a damp cloth and warm iron.

Sew on press studs and hook and bar at neck edge.

## GLOVES TO MATCH

**MEASUREMENTS.** — Width about 3 ins. unstretched ; average size fitting.

### TO MAKE RIGHT-HAND GLOVE

Using the set of No. 13 needles and white wool, cast on each of 3 needles, 18-18-18 (= 54 sts.). Rib 4 rounds.

**5th round.**—P. 2 tog., w.r.n. ; rep. from beg. to ending p. 2.

**6th, 7th and 8th rounds.**—K. Continue in patt. (= 6 rounds instead of rows) as for jumper, for 20 rounds.

**Commence Thumb Shaping.**—K. 28, r. 1 (= raise 1 by knitting into the back of the loop before next st.), then k. 2, r. 1, k. to end (= 56 sts.).

**Next 2 rounds.**—Keep to patt. without inc.

**3rd round.**—K. 28, r. 1, k. 4, r. 1, k. to end (= 58 sts.).

Rep. these last 3 rounds, inc. on each 3rd round, and knitting 2 sts. extra between increasings on every inc. round, until 22 sts. for thumb on needle (= 52 for hand).

**Next round.**—K. 28, slip the 22 thumb sts. on spare pin, cast on 4 sts. to back of these, k. to end (= 56 sts.).

Work 19 rounds straight.

**Fingers.**—K. 35, cast on 4 to end of this needle, then sl. the 4 plus, first 14 sts. (= 18 sts.) on to 3 needles and k. in rounds for 30 in all, or 2¾ ins.

**Shape Top.**—(K. 1, k. 2 tog.) ; rep. to ending k. 2 (= 12 sts.).

K. 1 round.

**Next.**—K. 2 tog. to end (= 6 sts.), break off wool, run through sts. and fasten off securely.

**2nd finger.**—Take next 7 sts. back and front of hand, cast on 4 to first needle, then k. across the 7 at front, then pick up 4 sts. into lower edge of first finger, then k. 7 at back, then slip the 22 sts. on to 3 needles, and work as for first finger, completing 34 rounds or 3¼ ins. before dec.

**3rd finger.**—As 2nd, but k. 30 rounds before dec. or 3 ins.

**4th finger.**—Take last 7 sts. at front and back, then pick up 4 into lower edge of 3rd finger (= 18 sts.), k. 26 rounds or 2½ ins., then dec. as follows :

(K. 1, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 12 sts.), k. 1 round, break off wool and run through and fasten off securely.

**Thumb.**—Pick up the 22 sts. for thumb, pick up 4 sts. into the 4 cast-on sts. and divide on 3 needles, k. 28 rounds or 2½ ins., dec. on 1st and 3rd rounds by k. 2 tog. twice over 4 picked up sts. (= 22 sts. on needle).

**Shape Top.**—K. 2, then (k. 2 tog., k. 2 to end.

K. 1 round.

Then k. 1, then (k. 2 tog., k. 1) to end. Break off wool and draw through sts., fasten off securely.

### LEFT-HAND TO PAIR

Thumb shaping row will read : k. 24, r. 1, k. 2, r. 1, k. 28.

Fingers and remainder of glove as for right glove.

### TO MAKE UP

Turn under and over on picot row, the first rib rows and hem.

Press under a damp cloth and warm iron.

## PIRATE CAP TO MATCH

**MEASUREMENTS.**—20 ins., stretching to 22 ins. around head ; 5½ ins. depth.

### TO MAKE THE PIRATE CAP

Using the set of No. 13 needles and white wool, cast on each of 3 needles, 53-53-54 sts. (= 160).

Rib in k. 1, p. 1 firmly for 6 rounds.

Join pink wool and using the No. 11 needles, k. 4 rounds.

In white, k. 2 rounds.

These 6 rounds complete the patt.

Rep. them, dec. on every 4th pink round as follows :

**10th round.**—(K. 8, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 144 sts.).

**16th round.**—(Or 2nd dec.) (k. 7, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 128 sts.).

**22nd round.**—(Or 3rd dec.) (k. 6, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 112 sts.).

**28th round.**—(Or 4th dec.) (k. 5, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 96 sts.).

**34th round.**—(Or 5th dec.) (k. 4, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 80 sts.).

**40th round.**—(Or 6th dec.) (k. 3, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 64 sts.).

**46th round.**—(Or 7th dec.) (k. 2, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 48 sts.).

**52nd round.**—(Or 8th dec.) (k. 1, k. 2 tog.) to end (= 32 sts.).

**58th round.**—(Or 9th dec.) (k. 2 tog.) to end (= 16 sts.).

Work 2 rounds in white, dec. 2nd round by k. 2 tog. to end.

Break off wool, run through sts. and fasten off.

Make a pompon in white, about 2 ins. in depth and nice and thick and sew to top.

Press lightly.

END


1.12.54

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